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Nota di contenuto	pt. 1. Encounters: Awakening European minds -- European impressions -- The quest for barkcloth names -- The ancestry of barkcloth -- 2. Creating barkcloth -- Story of a tree -- Substance of color -- Rubbing boards -- Sticky stuff -- Supersizing it -- Working together -- 3. Collecting barkcloth -- Enticing cloth -- Barkcloth appropriations -- the Alexander Shaw books -- "Spanish Lake" -- Lost collections? -- Decreasing interest -- Beachcombers, merchants, and whalers -- Missionaries -- Collecting souvenirs. pt. 2. Creativity: Creativity in shapes and forms -- Tongan-style barkcloth -- Barkcloth design through time --Barkcloth circulation -- Imagining and forging the tongan land -- Between the cross and the cloth -- Before missionary arrival -- Missionary failure and uncertainties, 1797-1827 -- Triumphant Christianity, 1828-1860 -- "Civilizing mission," gender, industriousness and economic policies --

Creating beautiful and moral bodies -- Missionary attitudes and an east-west divide -- Wesleyan and Marist competition -- Barkcloth-a way of being in the world.

pt. 3. Female agency -- Capturing the "Female essence"? -- Enveloped by ngatu -- Defining koloa -- Value of koloa -- Are koloa gendered? -- A feast for the senses -- A modern dynast of royals -- Royal ceremonies-a wedding, two funerals, and a coronation -- Characteristics of barkcloth -- Conflated sensations -- Conclusion-encounters, creativity, and female agency -- Encounters-surprising and vital occurrences -- Creativity-ingenious imagination -- Female agency-prestigious mediation.

Sommario/riassunto

Tongan barkcloth, made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree, still features lavishly in Polynesian ceremonies all over the world. Yet despite the attention paid to this textile in exhibitions, by anthropologists and by art historians, very little is known about its history. This book provides a unique insight into Polynesian material culture by exploring the rich cultural history of barkcloth. Arguing that the manufacture, decoration and use of barkcloth are vehicles of creativity and female agency, it places the materiality of textiles at the heart of Tongan culture. Based on extensive ethnographic and archival research over twelve years, Veys uncovers stories of ceremony, gender, the senses, collecting, religion and nationhood, from the 'birth' of barkcloth in the 18th century right up to contemporary Polynesian culture today, revealing not only how Tongans made (and still make) barkcloth, but also how it defines what it means to be Tongan. Extending the study outside of Tonga to explore the place of barkcloth in the European imagination, Veys addresses the museum collections of Tongan barkcloth held worldwide, from the UK to Italy, Switzerland to the USA, addressing the bias of the European 'gaze' and challenging traditional gendered understandings of the cloth.
