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Colonialism has shaped the world we live in today and has often been studied at a global level, but there is less understanding of how colonial relations operated locally. Taking twentieth-century Papua New Guinea as its focus, this book charts the changes in colonial relationships as they were expressed through the flow of material culture. Collections made by anthropologists in New Britain in the first half of the century are compared with recent fieldwork in the area to provide a particularly in-depth picture of historical change. Museum collections can reveal how people dealt with changes in the nature of community, gender relations and notions of power through the shifting use of objects in ritual and exchange. Objects, photographs and archives bring to life both the individual characters of colonial New Britain and the longer-term patterns of history. Drawing on related disciplines, they show how social relationships between Melanesians, whites and other communities helped to erode distinctions between colonizers and locals, distinctions that have been maintained by scholars of colonialism in the past.