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How do national stereotypes emerge? To which extent are they determined by historical or ideological circumstances, or else by cultural, literary or discursive conventions? This first inclusive critical compendium on national characterizations and national (cultural or ethnic) stereotypes contains 120 articles by 73 contributors. Its three parts offer [1] a number of in-depth survey articles on ethnic and national images in European literatures and cultures over many centuries; [2] an encyclopedic survey of the stereotypes and characterizations traditionally ascribed to various ethnicities and nationalities; and [3] a conspectus of relevant concepts in various cultural fields and scholarly disciplines. The volume as a whole, as well as each of the articles, has extensive bibliographies for further critical reading. Imagology is intended both for students and for senior scholars, facilitating not only a first acquaintance with the historical development, typology and poetics of national stereotypes, but also a deepening of our understanding and analytical perspective by interdisciplinary and comparative contextualization and extensive cross-referencing.