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Acknowledgment Since its 'rediscovery' and the appearance of the first printed editions in the middle of the last century, Beowulf has attracted considerable scholarly attention, generating something approaching three thousand learned papers, more that is than any other single work of literature, superseding The Canterbury Tales and threatening to outstrip even the whole of Shakespeare's tragedies. It is clear that any recent worker in this field will owe an enormous debt to his predecessors—whose views he will have adopted either consciously or unconsciously, and whose influence will be visible on every page.