A basic handbook such as Hoffmann and Forssman's Avestan phonology and morphology from 1996 does not need a special reason to be edited a second time, other than being sold out. Yet the subtitle adds that this second edition has been revised ("durchgesehen") and enlarged ("erweitert"), which arouses expectations: will some of the omissions of the first edition have been repaired, and will new insights from the years after 1996 have been incorporated? See R.S.P. Beekes, Kratylos 44, 1999, 62-71, for a critical review of the first edition.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to detect any traces of a review (if this is the correct translation of "durchgesehen", rather than 'looked through') of the original text. The entire body of the book, from part one, introduction, to part six, verbal inflection, has been left unchanged. In the preface, F. motivates the absence of changes in the body of the text by the death of H. in 1996: "Der Neubearbeitung konnten sein Wissen und sein Rat nicht mehr zugute kommen. Es lag daher nahe, den Textteil im wesentlichen unverändert zu belassen." One cannot blame the author for his piety, nor for his modesty. But since this grammar will probably remain a standard work of reference for some time to come, it would have been worthwhile at least to repair some of the more obvious errors and specifications of the first edition. In some cases, this would have cost little effort: the ordinal numbers and the correlatives, which were forgotten in the first edition, could have been added; the unlikely metatheses of "-e-to" and of "-te to "-ti", which are assumed in § 36 and 37, could have been abandoned; the rather short discussion of the laryngeals in § 44 and 45 could have been extended without changing the order or number of paragraphs; a list of preverbs and prepositions, together with the cases they govern, would have been of great help to students of Avestan. Not even the small typo on p. 230 (read 189a for 189c), which was noted by Beekes, has been repaired.

A few other corrections may be added here. P. 57: there is no form varahājana (cf. Kellens, Les Noms-racines, 161); p. 58: there is no noun saisai-‘shade’, only an adj. asaisa-‘which has no shade’ (Y 57.27 = Yt 10.68); p. 166: for a mountain name asaia (Yt 10.4); p. 166: for OAV. tae-ci, read tae-ći (Yt 32.11); p. 171: for Ya. būsūhāna, read e dhūhāna (P 49); p. 180: for the 3rd dual ending -ōdē, read only -ōdē; p. 225: for jimbāna, read jimaśana (Yt 32; on this form, see Kellens, Le verbe avestique, Wiesbaden 1984, 384).

The only part which has been substantially enlarged in the second edition is the appendix, a thematic survey of the main scholarly literature. The number of pages devoted to the appendix has not increased, but more text has been fitted onto a page. Many studies and observations on Avestan, made between 1995 and 2002 by various scholars, have been referred to, and, more than once, earlier literature which was not included in the enumeration of the first edition has also been added to clarify specific points.

Personally, I would have preferred F. to state more clearly whether he agrees or disagrees with the cited references. For instance, Beekes' conclusion that -aie must have resulted from diphthongization of -ia is duly referred to, but since it obviously conflicts with H.'s view given in § 37 of the grammar, a short remark on the editor's stance would have been in place. In a few cases, F. adds some information of his own. Thus, concerning § 25 about the shortening of long ē in front of ūm, he adds that Y 9.10 gāda-uma- might show this shortening. Other additions are found in the sections on sibilants (for instance on the optatives hīsāt and zīsāt), and in the section on other consonantal phenomena, which now includes a heading, ‘metathesis’. Two small corrections: on p. 258, for yazadaita, read yazadaita; on p. 247, for Introducción al Avestico, Madrid 2000 read 2001.

To put it briefly, this book has remained the fine grammar it already was. Those who were hoping for an improved version of the first edition will be disappointed, but they will find the commented bibliography in the appendix very useful.

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