Errata: Damascius’ Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles, Trans. Sara Ahbel-Rappe

(Pg. no. in A-R/pg. no. in Combès/Westerink)

67/3: “we shall … refer to all things … as united [sic: unitary], as unified, or as multiplied”

73/10: “unified [sic: unitary] intellection”

79/19: “unified [sic: unitary] and super-essential cognition”

109/60: “This world is more ungraspable [sic: aporrêtoteros should be ‘more ineffable’; ‘Ineffable’ a technical term in Damascius] than the so-called hidden world, since it cannot even be called a world, [a clause in the Greek has dropped out here—‘but the indeterminate one-all, nor, in truth, “all”,’] but rather the One before all worlds [sic: ‘worlds’ incorrect complement], and it embraces all things in its perfectly unique simplicity [sic: têi oikeiai pantelei haplotêti, ‘the perfect simplicity proper to it’]”

115/65: “among the many unified [sic: unitary] beings that are available for knowledge”

— “by means of that unified [sic: unitary] intellection that the deity has in itself”

117/69: “supersubstantial beings”—“beings” not in the text, and senseless to supplement

118/71: “compression [of thought] toward the Unified [sic: unitary] or [sic: kai, ‘and’] toward the all as one [sic: kata to hen, C-W has ‘selon l’un’; elsewhere A-R renders ‘in the one’, also incorrect.”

—/—: “… that which in its unity transcends Being, and is unified as a unity [sic: unitary]”

—/—: “Being, which we can call the Unified” [sic: unitary]

—/—: “the nonmultiple [apolu] is called the singular [haploun].” Given Damascius’ obvious pun, why translate haploun as “singular” rather than the expected “simple”?

123/78: “I am not saying at this point… [sic: oupô, ‘not saying at all’ in this context]”

—/79: “not the Unified before all things, but rather the super-Unified [sic: huperêplômenên, ‘super-simplified’] beyond all things”

132/89 (as well as 134/92, 135/94, 136/95 and elsewhere frequently): “all things are in [sic: kata] the One.” Why not, as at 316/III 2 “in terms of the One”?

136/96: A-R uses “cause of” for a series of compounds with -poion; misleading, given controversial status of “causality” per se, recognized by A-R at 65f (albeit fails to recognize that Proclus denies causality to the One)
“neither mixture nor the unity [sic: sunagôgê; C-W has ‘rassemblement’; below, ‘concentration’ immediately below, despite this term being used generally by A-R to translate sunairesis] belong to the One”

“However [sic: gar, ‘for’], the dissimilar procession is not of all…”

“some of the gods are called virgins or demi-gods [sic: êitheoi, ‘unmarried youths’]”

“the summit of the intellective [sic: intelligible] world”

“if the One is before the intellectual [sic: intelligible] father”

“but perhaps through simple intellection [sic: haplôi … noêmati, ‘through a simple intelligible [object]’, cp. C-W, ‘par une pensée simple’]”

“he lets unified [sic: unitary] be before essential being”

“compressed into one unitary [sic: asuntheton, ‘non-composite’] nature”

“but before this, to unified [sic: unitary] Being, nevertheless…”

“the originating point [sic: akron, ‘summit’; note ‘the one summit of all things’ immediately below] of each thing”

“revered as the one god insofar as it is Being [sic: kata to on, hence C-W, ‘un seul dieu selon l’être’]?”

“the intelligible intellect must be contemplated, as subject to intellectual [sic: intelligible] differentiation”

“before unified [sic: unitary] and substantial knowledge”

“In translation of Chaldaean Oracles frag. 1, “flashing with the intellectual rays [tomaisin],” should be “divisions”, “cuts”, “sections” or the like; C-W “tranchants”.

“unified life homonymous with each of the terms beneath it”—A-R omits tis; C-W, “c’est là une certaine vie unifiée”

“the intelligible [sic: gnôston, ‘knowable’, with distinct usage from technical term noêton, ‘intelligible’] is not knowable by means of any unified [sic: unitary] knowledge … but only by the knowledge that is unified”

—in [sic: kata] the Unified that possesses unified [sic: unitary] and substantial knowledge, but is prior to both”
245/112: “the body is distinct in this way from the intellect because of mind [sic: psuchê, soul]”

258/132: “It is therefore with [sic] the third term strictly speaking that first remains or proceeds or reverts toward what is prior to itself.”

259/134: “division into the unique properties did not come about at the level of subsistence”—garbled; cf. C-W, “la division des propriétés, qui sont selon la subsistence, ne s’est pas produite.”

266/139: “or else in unified [sic: unitary], multiplied, and some middle term, which someone might designate ‘unitary’ [sic: unified]”

282/166: “in the case of substance, there is substantiality or subsistence [sic: hupostasis, whereas A-R elsewhere wishes to use ‘subsistence’ for huparxis], and there is that which is substantialized”

295/183: “before the parts if it should subsist in the parts, since it grants a place for the subsisting to the parts, and this subsisting is subject to partition”—all hupostasis, despite A-R’s supposed intention to use “subsistence” for huparxis; then, at bottom of page, “realize themselves in its own hypostasis”.

304/197: “existence” and “root existence” used here to translate huparxis, when previously A-R has insisted on using “subsistence”; also “unitive” here for heniaios, elsewhere “unitary”, as immediately below on 304/198.

305/198: “the whole specific hypotheses [sic: hypostases]”


307/202: lines 12-13 of the Greek text not included in the translation at all

311/209: “the absolute many do not wish to introduce great [sic: pollas, many; C-W, ‘plurielles’] differences”

311f/210: “The one that is differentiated from substance is … itself unified [sic: unitary] substance, just as life exists in a twofold sense, the one is unified [sic: unitary] life … and intellect also exists in a twofold sense…”, but at top of 312, “the procession of the unitary”

312/212: “source of the things proceeding after the intellectives”—meta tauta here refers to the intelligibles, not the intellectives; C-W, “source des intellectifs qui procèdent après les intelligibles”
313/213: “The second principle is the many of the absolute One, just as power is said to be the principle of the father”—the line is merely “as power is said to be of the father”; archê incorrectly interpolated from line above, cf. C-W, “le deuxième principe est les plusieurs de l’un pur, de même qu’il est dit la puissance du père.” (Cf. 324/III 15, “the many of the One” as “the power of the father”)

319/III 6: “whether procession is double … one uniform … or heteroform … or if there is one nature”—A-R garbles the logic here; the uniform-and-heteroform processions constitute one alternative, the single nature of procession the other; hence the sentence should read “whether procession is double … one uniform … one heteroform … or if there is one nature”.

319/7: “and so the uniform is evidently the heteroform”—A-R inverts the logic; should be “and so the heteroform is evidently the uniform”, as in C-W.

333/29: “the chorus of the many gods is the complete pleroma of Zeus, in terms of the differentiated, but it is Dionysus as the totality of the Unified”—should read more like (in accord with C-W) “the chorus of the many [gods] is [produced] according to the whole discriminated pleroma of him, Dionysus according to the whole unified [pleroma of him]”

338/37: “the nature of each [god]”—“each” plainly refers, not to “gods”, but to “sources”

345/47: “of those that are pandemic, some are demiurgic and some are also intellects and gods”—should read (as in C-W), “among them, those who are pandemic are also all demiurgic, all intellects and all goddesses”

351/59: “imparticible” for amethekton, “unparticipated” or “imparticiable”; neither “particible” nor “imparticible” is a word according to the OED. A-R proceeds from this point on to use “imparticible” and “particible” frequently, the latter frequently erroneously autocorrected (presumably) to “participle”.

352/60: “participle” twice for A-R’s neologistic “particible”

354/64: “But why is it necessary to use many arguments, when the gods thus make the same assumptions about the many…”—incorrect; tous theous, in the accusative, plainly not the subject of the clause, hence C-W: “des philosophes avant Jamblique conçoivent aussi bien la pluralité des dieux de cette façon…” Indeed, Damascius goes on to argue against the position that A-R would have him attributing to the gods!

364/80: “participle” again for A-R’s neologistic “particible” [sic], yet A-R has also “unparticipated” here, forgetting to use neologism “imparticible” [sic]

365/82: more occurrences of “participle” alongside “imparticible” [sic], but A-R also uses “participated” and “unparticipated”, without consistency
—/—: “For each encosmic god would not be supermundane before”—why use Latinate “supermundane” alongside Greek “encosmic”, when the pair “hypercosmic/encosmic” is established in the literature, or use “supermundane/mundane”?

—/83: “Therefore, it is not the case that the upper realm compared with the lower realm is restricted in terms of quantity”—Sentence is counterfactual in C-W.

It also seems that A-R has incorrectly divided the chapter at 83.3, whereas C-W, correctly I think, continues it down to 83.17.

366/83: “particible” [sic], alongside “participated”; “unparticipated” twice at 367/84

367/85: “henads established in [sic: kata] the One”; note above “unified as [kata] the One-Being”—even if kata could be read as “in”, why would it be different in the two cases?

Also, “differentiated [sic: antidiéirêmenon, ‘contradistinguished’] with respect to Being, in the first manifestation of alterity...”—note that A-R uses “differentiation” to translate a host of different terms in Damascius.

Also, “participle” again for “particible” [sic].

371/92: “[we are not trying to ascend] from separate characters, that is, from the synthetic or the unitary, but from the unique character that is before any separation”—sentence reads pro amphoin, “prior to both” or “to either”. A-R’s reading has the effect of obscuring the logical function of “or” in the sentence.

372/93: “the first intellect, from which the first unified [sic: unitary] intellect and the first substantial intellect were differentiated”

373/95: “while intellective [sic: intelligible] life is life neither as hypostasis or property...”

“...nor yet is it the same as a divided plurality and composed from particulars either at random [sic: ek tinôn haplôs, A-R’s reading eccentric; C-W, ‘de choses non qualifiées’] or from specific particulars, but it is Unified [sic: hênômenon, plural; C-W, ‘une pluralité de choses unifiées’] and belongs to that family that includes...”

375/99: “the continuous is after the differentiated”—diôrismenon is rather determinate or, aptly in this case, “discrete”; another example of overuse of “differentiate”. See also below, “therefore the multitude is unified, and not even differentiated [diatroumenon, ‘divided’] into the first multiplicities...”

376/100 & 101: A-R mysteriously abandons the neologisms “particible” and “imparticible” [sic] for standard English “participated” and “unparticipated” to render methekton/amethekton.
377/101: “The Unified is not only a Henad [sic: why capitalized?] but it is also substance, although it is also before both [monad [sic: henad] and substance]”

379/105: “undergoing entropy and organization again”—eccentric rendering of chôrizontai te kai suntattontai; C-W, “se séparent et se coordonnent”

380/106: “the one is One, the other is being alone and throughout its entire hypostasis [sic: huparxis, elsewhere generally ‘subsistence’ for A-R, though sometimes ‘existence’ or ‘root existence’]”

—/107: “especially like the One is the whole race of gods”—should read “the whole intelligible [noêton] race of gods”

Also, “Not even this visible heaven, although it has produced the supercelestial [sic: hupouranion, ‘subcelestial’] world…”

381/108: “the triad is not a differentiation [diakrisis] of the substances that belong to it, but only the indication of multiplicity”—shows why greater terminological diversity is needed in the translation

386/109: “we must seek the intellectual meaning of the traditions of the gods [that is, the Oracles]”—A-R’s bracketed insertion here unwarranted, even if in accord with C-W; note references, e.g., to Orpheus above at 109.8 and below at 391/118f

387/112: “What is the intellective [sic: intelligible] [diacosm]? … the number after the intellective [sic: intelligible] will belong to life, as we say.”

389/116: “[…what the constitution of] the intelligible-intellective world would be after the intellective, and what the intellective world would be [sic: ‘the intelligible-intellective world after it, and what the intellective world would be’]”

390/117: “[interior] heaven [sic: inferior]”

392/121: “since this substance is only [found in] one substance, the unitary [sic: henótheisan], or perhaps to use a better term, it is mixed”—in addition, the phrase is garbled; cf. C-W, “en une substance seule, unifiée, et, pour mieux dire sans doute, mélangée”

402/137: “Therefore, let the intellective [sic: intelligible] triad be called, to the extent that it is possible…”

[168-173 in the Greek text not included in A-R’s translation]