Eustratios of Nicaea’s acquaintance with arguments and formulas depending directly or indirectly upon Neoplatonic sources is not entirely a new issue. For instance, Zervos’s famous 1920 monograph on Psellos briefly sketches some notes on Eustratios’ Neoplatonic background and explicitly mentions Proklos as his source while linking this influence directly to the Psellian legacy. However, it was with Giocarinis’ and Steel’s studies on Eustratios’ defense of the Platonic ideal Good in his commentary on book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the Neoplatonic influence on Eustratios became evident. In particular, Steel found direct evidence of a dependence upon Proklos’ commentary on the *Parmenides*, as well as the presence in Michael of Ephesus’ commentary on book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Damaskios’ commentary on the *Philebus*, probably one of the few traces of the influence of this latter work in Byzantium.

Until now scholars have devoted their attention mainly to Eustratios’ commentary on book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, whereas the aim of the present paper is to investigate the role played by Neoplatonic sources in his commentary on book VI of that same work. Here, although the commentator does not deal directly with the Aristotelian criticism of the Platonic theory of knowledge, Eustratios still seems to regard the Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition as a reliable set of sources for the exegesis of the Aristotelian text.

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1 Zervos (1973) 225–227.
In a previous article I proved that the influence of the Neoplatonists, in particular Proklos, is evident in both the terminology and the arguments developed by Eustratios. This influence seems to be widespread throughout the three commentaries written by this Byzantine author.\(^4\) Focusing on the problem of the Aristotelian distinction between absolute (ἁπλῶς) and conditional necessity (ἐξ ὑποθέσεως), I emphasized that Eustratios interprets this distinction within a non-Aristotelian framework. Despite the complementarity in Aristotle of the two kinds of necessity, he strictly applies the absolute one to what he calls “beings in the proper sense of the term” (χωρίως ὄντα), which he describes as those beings properly so-called which always remain self-identical (τὰ ἁπλῶς κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντα); and the conditional one to “that which is never a proper being” (ὁντως οὐδέποτε ὄν), which he associates with what is subject to coming to be and passing away.\(^5\) He also situates this particular interpretation of Aristotle’s different kinds of necessity within the framework of the Neoplatonic distinction between “causes” (αἴτια) and “concomitant causes” (συναίτια). Only the first can be considered causes properly so-called as they are “the only ones which transcend their effects” (μόνα τῶν αἰτιατῶν ἐξήκοντα).\(^6\) In both cases, Eustratios quotes Proklos literally.\(^7\)

This preference for Neoplatonic sources is reflected in the peculiar argumentative structure which often seems to characterize Eustratios’ commentary on book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. His comments on the different *lemmata* are often introduced by an initial “safe” explanation of the Aristotelian text, in which Eustratios seems to simply expand the lemma with material of his own or taken from the tradition of the Late antique commentators. He then introduces a further interpretative level by using a terminology referable to the Neoplatonic tradition, in particular to Proklos, which seems to be more representative of Eustratios’ position.\(^8\)

\(^4\) Trizio (2006).
\(^5\) In EN 293.10–20.
\(^6\) In EN 267.18–22.
\(^7\) Cf. for example *Inst.* 75: Πῶς τὸ κρίως αἴτιον λεγόμενον ἐξήκοντα τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος = In EN 267.19–22 τῆς μὲν γὰρ γνώσεως ἀρχαὶ οἱ δρόμοι καὶ τὰ ἀξιώματα ἐπὶ γε τῶν ἀναγκαίων, τῆς δὲ ὑποθέσεως τὰ ποιητικὰ καὶ τὰ τέλικα. ταῦτα γὰρ μόνα κρίως αἴτιον, ὅτι καὶ μόνα τῶν αἰτιατῶν ἐξήκοντα.