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EU PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA

Trends and Patterns

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Abstract

The European Union identified peacebuilding as one of the priorities of its foreign and security policy. Since 2003, when the EU launched its first three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, the prospects for the EU to pursue African peacebuilding has become one of its cores for implementing a multilateral security policy. This article investigates the link between the concept of peacebuilding and the practice of CSDP operations and missions. The points of examination dwell on EU's understanding of peacebuilding activities carried out in CSDP operations. The article also explores the decision- and policy-making structures responsible for the planning and development of peacebuilding activities in CSDP missions and operations. It analyses how the EU institutions and policymakers within the CSDP structures influence the understanding of peacebuilding carried out in CSDP operations. The concluding analysis studies the impact of the existing institutions between the EU and African Union (AU) on long-term peace in the region and whether the EU has been able to develop positive notions of peacebuilding in the region.

Keywords- European Union, African Union, Peacekeeping Missions, Strategic Partnership

Since the inception of the EU (European Union) in 1991, European Security Strategy has contextualized the EU's security needs to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and robust intervention. Regional governance has not only been important in the light of EU operations, but also for the emerging decolonized African continent when it comes to promoting democratic institutions in the region. The EU's perpetual willingness to increase African capabilities to actively deal with a conflict situation and to strengthen cooperation with the international community is referred to in EU Common Positions in 2001, 2004 and 2005 documents.¹ The EU- Africa summit held in Lisbon (2007) was an important element of the Africa- EU Strategic Partnership's political and diplomatic momentum to effectively deal with issues of peace and security. The African Security and Peace Architecture (APSA),

¹ Brosig, Malte. "EU peacekeeping in Africa: from functional niches to interlocking security." *International Peacekeeping* 21, no. 1 (2014): 74-90.

which comprehensively defines the security framework of the AU (African Union) and the EU, incorporates all the peacebuilding activities that AU has undertaken involving maintaining human security. It has also established the African Standby Force (ASF) involving external actors like the EU and United Nations.² Both the core partners in the functioning of the APSA prioritize the operation of the EU Peacekeeping operations. The inception of the European Security Strategy since 1999 has repeatedly put out documents and manuals which tried to incorporate a wider range of peace and stabilization mission in the African security issues.³ But how have the EU peacekeeping missions evolved on the African continent and what future does it hold for the safety of the region? Primarily, has the EU has been successful in establishing a narrative of peace and stability in the region? These questions demand an analysis of how EU peacekeeping missions have worked since the first mission in 2003. For this reason, this article explores the impact of the organizational interplay between the EU, the AU, and the UN on the EU's engagement in peace operations. It will analyse to what extent the support of AU and UN missions by the EU can be explained through emerging patterns of cooperation between the EU, the AU, and the UN. Does cooperation lead to delegation, division of labour or specialization of tasks between the EU and its partners? How is the EU's Africa strategy affected by institutional cooperation?

EU Peacekeeping and its Mechanism

EU's engagement in Africa has often been explained in terms of the interest of EU member states. Britain and France, which were prime contributors to the funding of the EU peacekeeping missions, have been historically the leading states for instrumentalizing the EU to "multilateralize" the African foreign policy. The EU's profile as an international actor developed with a focus on promoting the agenda of development and peace in Africa by maintaining diplomatic relations with the African Union. The St. Malo Declaration of Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair in 1988 established the way to what we know as the CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy).⁴ The declaration was important for providing the military component to the EU's foreign policy with less intervention from NATO.⁵ This also led to multilateral dialogues to create joint military alliances in both regions. The context of decolonialization and the ongoing Cold War assisted in the dynamic development of EU foreign policies which were missing previously. When the CSDP assisted in the European Security Strategy in 2003, the 2007 EU Battle Groups also became operational, and Lisbon Treaty streamlined all the treaties along

² Ibid.

³ Brosig, Malte. "The emerging peace and security regime in Africa: the role of the EU." *European Foreign Affairs Review* 16, no. 1 (2011).

⁴ Tor, Aleksandra. "Peacekeeping in Africa: The EU at a Crossroads. College of Europe Policy Brief# 11.17, November 2017." (2017).

⁵ Ibid.

the lines of EU foreign policy institutions.⁶ EU's foreign policy included a multilateral role for EU peace operations in Africa, with France being the main initiator of the missions. Intergovernmentalism was of the initial principalities with the CSDP and Security Strategy. Despite the fact the EU believed it would create positive developments in Africa, its inter-governmental and rational institutionalism is still an elitist approach based on a cost-benefit calculations. It allows different IO's (International Organization) to form their preferences and policies with nations on an individual basis⁷. The critical problem the EU's initial approach in Africa created was that this intergovernmental perspective became a tunnel for member state's interests rather than a significant factor of change in the region. African Union was concerned with this approach, equating it with high degrees of leverage on part of the EU. Consequently, it began striving for a much better equitable institutional policy.

The importance of CSDP and EU interests shaped how the member states of the African Union approaches developing peace in the region. So, the idea of the peacekeeping operations on the continent was built on inter- organizations arrangements between the UN, EU, and AU. The EU started its first independent military mission in Africa in 2003. This was called Operation Artemis and it legitimated EU ventures in 8 civilian and military missions.⁸ The most crucial operations were conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with five of nine missions taking place there.⁹ After the DRC, the EU focused on running peace operations in Guinea-Bissau and led Operation Atalanta in the Indian Ocean to contain piracy from Somali waters. Operation Atalanta was the first maritime mission under the CSDP mechanism and led to the concept of the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) which continued to counter the attacks of the Somali pirates.¹⁰ EU NAVFOR then bifurcated into EUNAVFOR Med, launched in 2015 to tackle migration issues in the southern Mediterranean under Operation SOPHIA. The primary reason why the operation mechanism did not allow for NATO intervention is because NATO's mandate works primarily on territorial defence and does not operate effectively in smaller missions regarding the African continent.¹¹ Rather than working with NATO, the EU subsequently established the MPCC (Military Planning and Conduct Capability) in 2017.¹² The MPCC was strengthened in 2020 with additional funding and staff members and the EU' first standing

⁶ Hengari, Alfredo Tjiurimo. "EU-UN partnership in military conflict management: Whither the African Union security infrastructure?" *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 11, no. 1 (2011).

⁷ Schroe, Evelyne. "The Best Strategic Use of CSDP in EU- Africa Relations." *CSDP Olympiad 2020*, 2020.

⁸ European Union Committee. "The EU and Africa: towards a strategic partnership." *34th Report of EU-Africa Partnership* (2006).

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Kmec, Vladimir. "The EU and Peacebuilding in CSDP Missions and Operations: Formulating Peacebuilding Policies." *University of Cambridge*. 2015.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Gowan, Richard. "European Military Contributions to UN Peace Operations in Africa: Maximizing Strategic Impact." *New York: Global Peace Operations Review*. July 23, 2015

permanent military headquarters.¹³ This multilateral institutional framework established the European Defense Fund (EDF) which created a separate division within the EU budget to finance multinational defence projects under logistical requirements of developments project, and not military strength. In 2009 the Lisbon Treaty introduced the ESDP in collaboration with the EEAS (European Union External Action) with a mutual defence clause, allowing for a deeper integration of military assignments.¹⁴ Operation Artemis not only was a success in the context of preserving peace but as per the UNSC resolution 1484,¹⁵ it aimed to prevent the atrocities and violence during the Ituri Conflict. The mission was proved to be a success because it allowed the EU to conduct a mission in the Balkans, Georgia, Indonesia, Sudan, Palestine, and Ukraine-Moldova. The security landscape in Africa has been effectively created by the peacekeeping missions under CSDP. In the early 2000s while the missions like Operation Artemis were bridging gaps within military establishments since 2010 EU military mission started to focus more on training and capacity-building.¹⁶ The EU Training Mission in Somalia was the first military training operation which was followed by Mali and CAR (Central African Republic). This pattern has now associated the EU mission with training and capacity-building components, which the UN peacekeeping operations have often referred to in its operation for conflict-affected regions. While UN peacekeeping missions have often been operational in the region, EU peacekeeping missions have a much higher success and development rate because the mandate between the AU and the EU allowed for much more flexibility.¹⁷ As the AU has a less rigid definition of the non-interference principle than the EU, intervention for the EU forces is much easier in cases of mass atrocities and war crimes. A prominent example in this regard is the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia) being a composite of the regional communities and mandate of the peacekeeping operation. When the AU created the APRA, essentially the reaction and deployment of forces became much rapid and in the case of CAR and Mali, the reaction was much quicker than the EU.¹⁸

European Union Global Peace Strategy

The European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) is the renewed doctrine of the EU peace mechanism to improve the CSDP's effectiveness in creating structures of defence and security for each member state.

¹³ Santopinto, Federica and Julien Marechal. "EU military and under the new European Peace Facility." *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*, 2021.

¹⁴ Cîrlig, Carmen-Cristina. "EU-UN cooperation in peacekeeping and crisis management." *EPRS/ European Parliamentary Research Service, Briefing November* (2015).

¹⁵ Hengai, Alfredo Tjiruimo. 2011.

¹⁶ Ansorg, Nadine, and Felix Haaß. "Three Ways to Improve Multilateral Peacekeeping in Africa (and Beyond)." *German Institute for Global and Area Studies*. 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Aleksandra, Tor. 2017. "Peacekeeping in Africa"

While replacing the European Security Strategy of 2003, EUGS introduced the document titled “Implementation Plan on Security and Defense” (IPSD).¹⁹ IPSD in Africa is characterized by the inter-institutional cooperation framework of the international security regime. Each peacekeeping operation is under the jurisdiction of EU-AU, so no member state is isolated in the EU’s foreign policy and its institutional interests. The institutional framework demarcates the need and necessities of a peaceful framework in the region. EU prefers to deploy troops on a short-term basis and under its direct political control and support.²⁰ Operation Artemis, EUFOR Congo RD and EUFOR Chad/CAR all align with this idea. All EU operations were short-specialized components of a larger UN mission.²¹ In Darfur, the EU did not intervene militarily but provided substantial capacity-building support for their hybrid mission. In these cases, the EU does not necessarily depend on military support, rather its agenda is to collaborate on peacebuilding activities. Such multilateral interaction has been the agenda for IPSD, and it has created a mechanism for an individual approach that nation-states can undertake for promoting peace in the region. The AU-EU summit of 2017 was held in Abidjan and the purpose of the summit was marked as a progressive shift in the political and policy development to Africa.²² The policy changes that were recommended were meant to increase investments and jobs in terms of capacity-building programs. These capacity-building programs not only brought substantive intervention from the EU member states but also increased jobs in ongoing or post-conflict areas. Geostategic changes in this occurrence are multilateral in their positive approach and outlooks.²³ But with the assertive entrance of external actors like China, Turkey, Russia, and the Arab states, EU’s reputation is being tested. By the end of 2019, EU-27 FDI stock in Africa was 222 billion Euros, compared to the worth of 42 billion Euros from the United States of America and 38 billion Euros from China.²⁴ This investment accounted for 32% of the total trade by the EU as compared to the external actors. But with China progressing with policies like the One Belt Road Initiative, it opens new and different avenues of diplomatic relations for Ethiopia and other African states.²⁵ Suddenly, Africa has shifted from being a problematic or ignored diplomatic avenue into being perceived as a dynamic continent that offers several opportunities for investment and trade. The race for Africa has thus created new diplomatic developments. Such new strategic footwork presents a new challenge for the EU’s agenda of peace and diplomatic stability. Even though the EU has been working effectively with its system and institutional

¹⁹Gegout, Catherine. "EU conflict management in Africa: the limits of an international actor." *Ethnopolitics* 8, no. 3-4 (2009): 403-415.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Aleksandra, Tor. 2017, “Peacekeeping in Africa”.

²³ Coning, Cedric de. "Peace Operations in Africa: the Next Decade." *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs- Working Paper*, 2007.

²⁴ Finabel. "The Potential of an EU Peacekeeping Force in Ukraine." *European Army Interoperability Centre*, 12 May 2020.

²⁵ Tardy, Thierry. "The European Union and UN Peace Operations: What Global–Regional Peace and Security Partnership?" In *United Nations peace operations in a changing global order*, pp. 231-251. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019.

approaches, the gaps in their operational capacity and real impact on the ground are being filled by external actors like China.

This puts the question that where exactly is the EU-AU peace and security relationship? The current relationship, especially in the framework the global peace agenda is complex. For more than two decades EU member states, particularly France, have attempted to move their security role in Africa from traditional security-focused direct military interventions in armed conflict towards a broader mechanism of ‘human security.’²⁶ This emphasis is consistent with the understanding of peacekeeping beyond just military developments. The EU commitment extends to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the global normative framework of the Women, Peace and Security. The latter framework was initiated by UNSC resolution 1325 and African Unions’ Regional Support Programme for the Elimination of Sexual Violence as a part of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative²⁷. The delegated and shared responsibilities of the EU mechanism further furnish the development of the international African security regime. EU’s role within this regime is not only based on comprehensively creating larger structures of military establishments but to create an all-inclusive conflict resolution that can create independent set-ups of EU and AU peacekeeping operations. The reciprocal dependencies between AU-EU and new establishment of a regional organization to create the self-dependent structures of peacebuilding remain crucial. In this sense, the supposed military capabilities of the EU should leave a positive imprint not only in the larger purpose of creating peace but to increase long-term effectiveness of International Organizations in creating mutual reliance.²⁸ The development of temporal functional convergence between IO’s is still missing amongst the peacekeeping missions and the existence of treaties and agreements during missions is based on these functionalities. This creates an important argument for peace as a main agenda for the EU in AU from the perspective of infrastructural developments. The interplay of the IO’s is necessary for the direct impact of peacekeeping operations in the African security regime. While operational needs for peacekeeping may depend on external conditions for each state, the inter-capability of the EU-AU creates a framework that can be an example to the UN and can be much effective than UNSC’s current approach to peacekeeping operations.²⁹ EU provides the logistical requirements, but the African Union decides on the reaction time, which was seen in the case for Darfur, Burundi, or Somalia. But comprehensive peace operations will continue to run on the financial and logistical developments forward by the EU interaction with African security. These developments are crucial to APSA as it has continued to determine the peace and security agenda on the African continent. The draft strategy, issued in March

²⁶ Schroe, Evelyne. 2020.

²⁷ Tardy. 2018, *ibid*.

²⁸ Hengai, Alfredo Tjiruimo. 2011.

²⁹ Derblom, Magnus, Eva Hagström Frisell, and Jennifer Schmidt. *UN-EU-AU coordination in peace operations in Africa*. Defence Analysis, Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), 2009..

2020, re-invigorated Joint Africa- Europe Strategy of 2007.³⁰ The draft strategy was conceived to propose an advanced political alliance between European and African countries to address the challenge of peace with multilateral dimensions. The draft strategy intends to use the majority bloc that Europe and Africa represent in the UN to strengthen rules-based multilateralism. At the bilateral level, intensification of the AU-EU political cooperation mobilizes the coordination of the resources between the two continents and the member states. This also limits the possibility that individual member states might progress with nationalistic agenda and would continue with an individually biased political agenda separate from the discussion of creating peace in the region collectively.³¹

Future challenges for the EU- AU Partnership

The 2007 Joint Africa-EU strategy created the ideas of the partnership between the two continents based on the consensus of democratic objectives for all the nations. The notion of equitable partnership forms a mutual basis of aid and infrastructural development for peace-building institutions. The future of the European Union being a key partner in African peace and security, and AU's engagement of political levels with the European Union will depend on the characterization of security. This question of characterization depends on whether these engagements, which have been enabled via the peacekeeping mission, will continue increasing their inclusivity in terms of participation and agenda. The development of peace constitutes not only military peace but peace on a humanitarian basis. Tangible interdependence concerning violent extremism, migration and food displacement will thus be the focus, because these issues test and build the pillars of the fiduciary relationship between the two continents.³² The EU Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan of 2015-2020³³ already identified these objectives as being crucial to the interest of the European Union as a whole. The missions in sub-Saharan Africa and the Gulf of Aden saw these objectives as being the at the forefront.

But how are the peacekeeping operations funded? EU-AU partnership has been financed by the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African peace operations.³⁴ Since its creation in 2004, the African Peace Facility (APF) of the European Development Fund (EDF) has financed African operations over 1.6 billion euros, with the largest share being allocated to mission in Somalia which was around 510 million euros for 2014 and 2015.³⁵ The continued support of the European Union to

³⁰ Santopinto, Federica. 2021.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Finabel. 2020

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Koremenos, Barbara, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal. "The rational design of international institutions." *International organization* 55, no. 4 (2001): 761-799.

³⁵ Haass & Ansorg. 2019

the African Union has repeatedly come under question considering the sceptical mechanism of the APSA. Operationalisation of APSA continues through capacity-building of the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs), AU Commission staff and military training cycles (Coning 2007). Deficits in APSA's operationalisation include the incomplete operational capability of the African Standby Force and uneven levels of the operational capacity of RECs/RMs. Moreover, AU-Rec's coordination and decision-making problems for humanitarian aid and quick response to armed conflicts create concerns about AU's operational capacities.³⁶ As demonstrated in the cases of Mali and the CAR, the EU brought to the attention for creating alternatives to the rapid deployment forces for peace operations. EU and AU have tried to institutionalize their partnership through high-level political dialogue between the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). High-level dialogues allowed both the regional organization for political exchange on crises and the two institutions' respective agendas. The ideas of these channels allowed for promoting developments to tackle terrorism, organized crime, piracy, migration, and communal tensions. These dialogues formulated the base of political and strategic developments which both the organizations seem to prioritize in the status quo.

The EU has achieved a lot in terms of conceptualizing its political establishments in different parts of Africa. The Sahel and the Horn of Africa offer examples of progress in terms of its comprehensive approach. They are also examples of the EU's willingness to prioritize its policies. Yet the difficulties observed in the operationalization of the 2015 Joint Communication on Capacity-building for Security and Development (CBSD) are a testimony to the existing institutional issues that still prevail in the operation of the African Union.³⁷ But there is a mismatch at the institutional level between the independence and prerogatives of the EU which does not allow it to institutionally correct the weakness of the AU Commission. Institution-to-institution talks tend to remain country-specific or technical rather than continental or international.³⁸ While the EU-PSC can theoretically deal with any regional or global theme, the AU-PSC confines its work to African affairs, consequently, international security issues have so far not entered EU-AU discussions. The operational nature of the EU-AU partnership inherently creates ambiguity over its strategic significance. On the EU side, the African ownership principle de-facto limits the level of control that could have an impact. For example, the fact that the APF has financed all African-led peace operations without linking the financial support to a particular EU political agenda attests to a certain acceptance of African ownership, but also reveal a lack of strategic vision³⁹. The same applies to the EU support for the operationalization of APSA which

³⁶ Gowan, Richard. 2015. "European Military Contributions to UN Peace Operations in Africa."

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Olsen, Gorm Rye. "The EU and military conflict management in Africa: for the good of Africa or Europe?." *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 2 (2009): 245-260.

³⁹ Santopinto, Federica. 2021, *ibid*.

relatively remains depoliticized. In other words, the EU's financial strength has not been properly converted into a political advantage, which is something the EU has strived for. Indeed, the 2015 EU Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan, as well as previous documents simply present APF funding as part of the strengthening of African capabilities and contributions to regional stability, not as one tool of strategic significance. While the EU and Africa may not always think along the same lines and have tensions in the International Criminal Court (ICC), security developments in and around Africa have brought the two continents closer together in terms of peace and stability.⁴⁰ The connectivity of threats means that a functioning AU in the face of major regional crises, and therefore a strong EU-AU relationship, are equally essential for the EU. Despite the allocation of initial APF support of around 55 million euros at the start of 2016, the EU believes that the loose institutional tie-up of the AU has led to the failure of its procurement a defective usage for its developmental and peacekeeping purposes.⁴¹ The expiration of the Cotonou Agreement in December 2020 – which contextualizes the overarching framework for EU relations with Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, as well as the APF's legal foundations – has enabled a push into restricting the efforts of both the continents and EU's decision to reform its financing instruments for 2021-2027.⁴²

EU's introduction of new financing mechanism for African peace and security structure is expected to take place in 2021.⁴³ This will replace the funds dedicated to the AU's efforts for resolving conflict areas and giving the instrument of flexibility to the European Union to decide and interpret the places of intervention. The reason for this new interest-based approach is coupled with the EU's directive of merging political intentions with the institutional mechanism of resolving peace and sustaining security. This means that the EU is play an oversight role in the AU in refraining leaking weapons into fragile states with the persistent problem of terrorism, extremism, and transnational organized crime. This allows them to create political strategies to guide and supervise their military activities. The new financial tools will give the EU the option of bypassing the AU to directly pay for national and sub-national military initiatives. It also provides options to give Brussels the clearance to use lethal equipment in areas of increased armed conflict. The decision to involve effective political strategies not only relies upon AU, as the EU should also make sure that these political strategies are maintained on their behalf. The trust towards the EU among local populations should only increase from this point onwards considering the ongoing pandemic has made the situation much worse. It allows for Brussels to actively create policies of peace that will continue to operate even if the peace operation is led by the African Union or the Security Council which includes the necessary financial support for training military officers. The major concern remains that it can create models of EU dominance in the region.

⁴⁰ Schroe, Officer- Cadet Evelyne. 2020, *ibid*.

⁴¹ Tardy. 2018, *ibid*.

⁴² Haass, Dr. Nadine Ansorg & Dr. Felix. 2019, *ibid*.

⁴³ Santopinto, Federica. 2021, *ibid*.

With the funding seemingly more leveraged by the EU, Addis Ababa will now have limited control over the proceedings and functioning of the military operations in the region. This can also increase ad hoc coalitions constituted outside the African Union. If the EU indeed resorts to increase ad hoc interventions, the idea of AU incorporation will be a lost cause. The EU should learn from the lessons of ad hoc coalitions such as the Multinational Joint Task Force for fighting Boko Haram in Chad basin or the G5 Sahel Joint Force which were reported to lack stability because they lacked a political plan to build trust among the population and prevent the rising communal tensions in the region.⁴⁴ If the need arises to work with such ad hoc coalitions, the EU should subordinate their military operations to political strategies and prepare to create development funds to work on their perfect implementation. These also become necessary in states where militaries have the potential to become a threat to the idea of stability itself, such as the August 2020 military coup in Mali. Brussels will then need strong risk assessment along with the African Union to provide intelligence solutions for both organizations and sustain peace for longer periods.

Conclusion

EU's conceptualisation of good governance for both the regions is based on a technocratic approach, which directs the institutions to support the ideals of democratization. The approach to EU-Africa relations is based upon a strong institutionalised framework wherein the technocratic approach is deeply entrenched. The literature on European integration includes cases of the political relations and impact of integration processes and European policymaking on the individual European member states. But there continues to be a deficit in understanding how EU-Africa relations impact national African politics and whether African politics have been strengthened in the aftermath of the EU peacekeeping missions. Instead, the African region is treated as a unit, just as the Africa-EU Strategy itself adopts a broad-brush approach to set out the technocratic framework for current policies and joint action by the two regions. The EU-AU partnership faces several challenges that will continue for the foreseeable future. The absence of historical institutional and political connections, especially with the expiration of the Cotonou Agreement, means fewer opportunities to shape identities and interests and to establish a social construction of reality. Diverging interests among the European member states, on the one hand, and among the countries of African on the other, have undermined the commitment to political dialogue and the creation of a common strategy. The future of the peacekeeping operations and the narrative of peace will stand upon these re-invigorated pillars of political establishments.

⁴⁴ Aleksandra, Tor. 2017, *ibid.*

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