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Virtue and Conflicts: Two Aspects of Aristotle's Concept of Politics

There is a renewed interest in political realism today. One of the directions looks at politics, as a necessarily agonistic field of human activity, as exemplified in the work of Carl Schmitt or Tilo Schabert. On the other hand, an earlier communitarian direction took Aristotle as one of the theorists of *harmonia*, later Latin *concordia*, a peaceful cooperation for the common good. According to realists, this is a non-realistic view of politics, as human nature does not make it possible to avoid conflicts among groups within a community, too. Christian realism tries to negotiate these two views. The present paper wants to defend this last position, arguing for two points. One is, that there is, in fact, conflict in the Aristotelian polis, but it does not exclude the demand for cooperation. The other one is the argument, that in fact the early modern discourse of reason of state, as exemplified mostly by Jesuits (e.g. Botero, Gracián), also negotiated a Machiavellian concept of power politics with the Christian ethical norms, relying on the Aristotelian-Ciceronian virtue of *phronesis* or *prudentia*.