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## **1661 : A Turning Point of Monarchy ? The French Example in European Perspective**

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### **Extrait de l'article**

French history occupies a special place in the historiography of Europe. The growth of the modern State, in particular, has frequently been presented mostly through French examples, replicated in various forms at various moments elsewhere in Western Europe. England has usually served as France's opposite number ; its political development seemed to indicate a wholly différent direction : a strengthening of the parliament instead of a disappearing états généraux ; "mixed monarchy" instead of absolute rule, and finally, a steady évolution towards modern democracy from 1689 onwards instead of a revolutionary downfall of the old order. In both countries, historians have long cherished the respective reputations of their fatherlands - leading to a strong *whig*-historiography in England and to a curious mixture of idealization of monarchical splendour as well as revolutionary zeal in France. The Holy Roman Empire offered less attractive a focus for national historians in its successor states. A multitude of baroque courts under nominal Habsburg suzerainty, undermined by French "protection" of Germanic liberties - this seemed the antithesis of a vital national State. The Peace of Westphalia conveniently served as an "end" of the old empire, and a starting point for the development of strong territorial states, most notably Prussia and a new Austria based not on the Empire but on the expanding Habsburg hereditary lands.

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