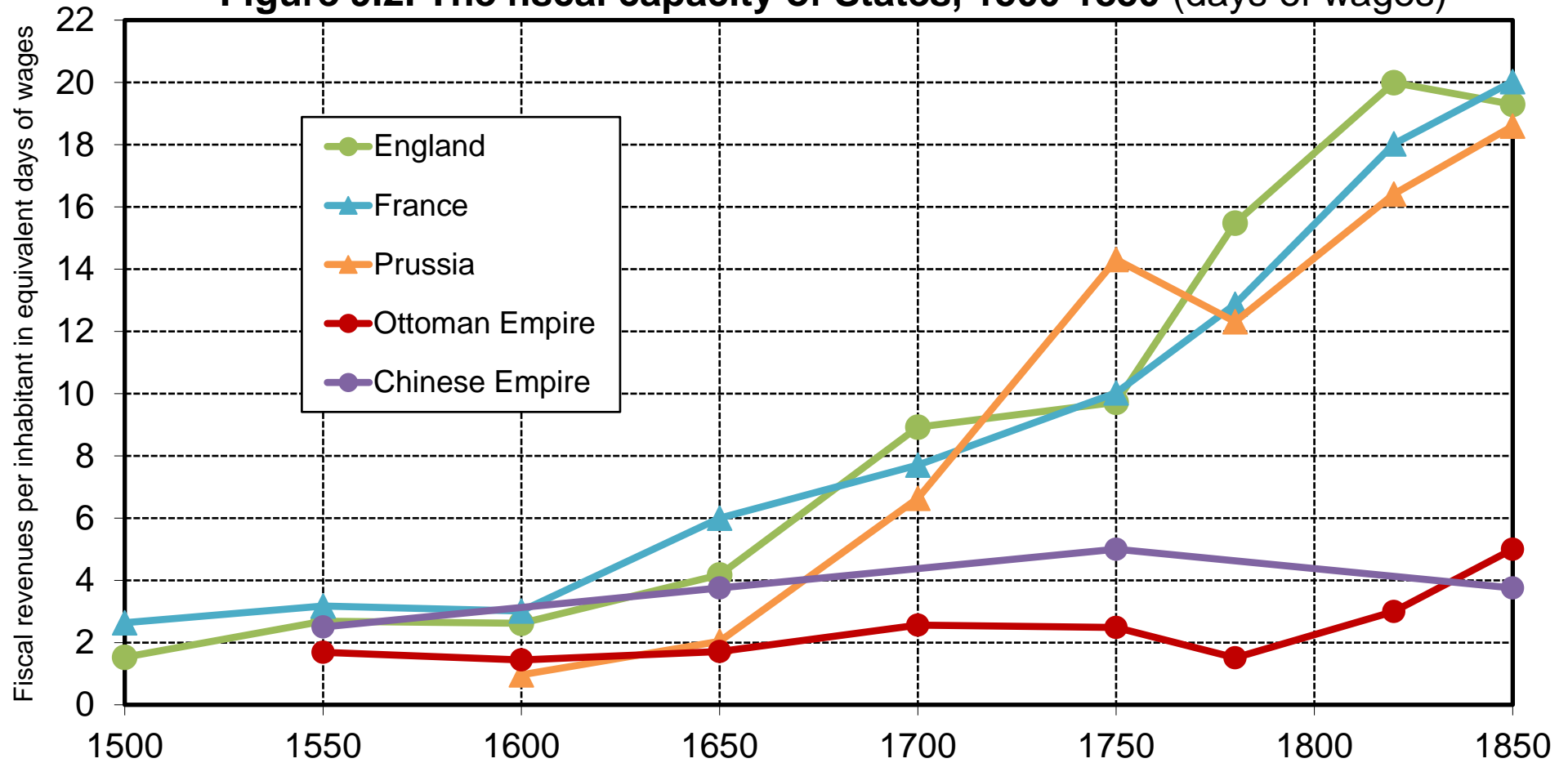


Figure 9.2. The fiscal capacity of States, 1500-1850 (days of wages)



Interpretation. Around 1500-1600, the fiscal revenues per inhabitants of the main European States were between 2 and 4 days of urban unskilled maneuver wages; in 1750-1780, they were between 10 and 20 days of unskilled wages. Per inhabitant fiscal revenues remained around 2-5 days of wages in the Ottoman Empire as well as in the Chinese Empire. With a per inhabitant national income estimated to be around 250 days of unskilled urban wage, this implies that tax revenues have stagnated around 1%-2% of national income in Chinese and Ottoman Empires, while they rose from 1%-2% to 6%-8% of national income in Europe. Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology.