# Military labour between XV and XX century

# ****Call for papers****

[First Conference of the European Labour History Network (ELHN)](http://wordpress.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=14e3621c90&id=09df84f7b6&e=0908ff32a3" \t "_blank)

[Turin (Italy), 14-16 December 2015](http://wordpress.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=14e3621c90&id=09df84f7b6&e=0908ff32a3" \t "_blank)

**Fighting for a Living in Liberal Italy: Draftees and Substitutes in the Italian Army (1861-1914)**

The paper will approach the military as a complex working environment by focusing on the Italian army in the Liberal age (1861-1914). After briefly reconstructing the evolution of Italian recruitment laws and practices from La Marmora’s draft act (1854) to the eve of World War I, the paper will analyze the military draft in terms of labor relations between the army and reenlisted people as well as between conscripts and their substitutes. From this perspective, I intend to investigate the strategies of “military employers” (those of the conscripts who engaged substitutes and those of the State which enrolled “volunteers”) as well as the young men who opted for soldiering as a form of employment. Particular attention will be paid to the reasons why these people chose to enroll/reenroll, their wages, their labor conditions and how they managed to be hired. At the same time, I aim to establish to what extent forced/voluntary and commodified/non-commodified military labor can be identified and disaggregated in the experience of nineteenth-century Italian soldiers. The paper will finally underline not only the
need for prudence in applying some tricky concepts (“universal conscription”, “volunteer”, “draftee”), but also the necessity to consider the shift from the pre-unification professional-dynastic
militia toward the national conscript army as a incomplete and non-linear progression.

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