Premises

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Groma 11 (2026) is a thematic issue devoted to upland archaeology, a distinctive field within landscape archaeology. It collects papers first presented in the "Archaeology of the Uplands"[1] session at the 2024 Landscape Archaeology Conference held in Alcalá de Henares, which marked the culmination of a collaboration among researchers that began with a workshop held at the Department of History and Cultures of the University of Bologna on 23–24 February 2023. Organized by a research group that included the present editors, the workshop brought together numerous projects investigating mountain areas and, more broadly, landscapes where dense vegetation and rugged terrain severely limit archaeological visibility. It was followed by a programme of presentations, lectures and meetings exploring the main methodological challenges of upland archaeology, of which this volume is the final outcome.

This methodological focus on landscape archaeology is closely aligned with the journal's long-standing interests. Upland archaeology addresses a central concern of contemporary archaeological research: the need to renew disciplinary approaches in response to the transformation of Mediterranean landscapes, marked by the gradual depopulation of inland areas and the steady spread of uncultivated land. At the same time, ever more powerful technologies, such as large-scale topographic surveys using UAV-mounted LiDAR sensors, are revealing a growing number of archaeological features in regions that have traditionally received little attention.

Just as the introduction of extensive geophysical survey in lowland areas allowed archaeology to move beyond the study of individual sites and to identify other components of ancient landscapes, research in upland regions is now prompting archaeologists to reassess established methods, including fieldwalking, and to develop new fieldwork protocols better suited to mountain environments. This methodological shift also entails a change in research perspective, reversing the conventional relationship between large, nucleated settlements and inland areas.

Some of these themes are already explored in the studies collected in this volume. Other lines of enquiry are only beginning to emerge, and we hope they will find a place in future issues of Groma.

[1] https://site.unibo.it/arcup/en