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# Herding And Hunting On The Highlands Of Transcaucasia And Ciscaucasia From The Sasanian To Late Medieval Periods. The Archaeozoology Of The Dariali Gorge

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## Abstract

This paper will present the evolution of subsistence economies of the Dariali Fort located in the Kazbegi district in north-east Georgia, on the border of Russia’s Republic of Ossetia–Alania. The lowest point in the Kazbegi region is around 1,200m above sea level (a.s.l.) and the highest point is over 5,000m a.s.l. The Kazbegi region has a very rich and diverse environment and natural resources. The relief around Dariali Fort is complex, mountainous and very rugged. As a result, the potential for agricultural activities is limited. Instead, the area is more suitable for sheep, goat and cattle breeding, together with the development

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of terrace field systems for pasture or growing animal fodder. The high altitude and harsh winter climate, with freezing temperatures from October to April, have favoured the development of transhumant pastoralism. During recent archaeological excavation of the last five years, approximately 80000 faunal remains were studied. This large assemblage constitutes a unique collection of domestic and wild mammals, birds and fish remains exploited by highland rural communities of medieval Georgia. It also allows a first description of the faunal remains of this region during approximately a millennia and characteristics of highlands agro-pastoralism.

**Keywords:** Georgia, Kazbegi, Antiquity, Medieval, Domesticates, hunting, agropastoralism