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5000 Years of Settlement History at Comana Pontica Turkey

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Comana Pontica is a Hellenistic sanctuary site located in ancient Pontus region near modern-day city of Tokat, Turkey. Strabo describes the site as a “temple-state” composed of a Temple for Ma, a chief priest, second in rank to the king of Pontus, festivals and a lively economy due to the festivals as well as abundant agricultural capacity. The sanctuary continued its existence into the Roman period diminishing with the introduction of Christianity into the region from the 3rd century onwards. Archaeological investigations at Comana have been on-going since 2004 alternating between surveys and excavations. The excavations conducted at Hamamtepe (a mound at the center of the site) revealed a very long settlement history at the site expanding from the Late-Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age to the Ottoman period. Following ten years of work on the Medieval period (esp. Middle Byzantine and Seljuk periods), Roman and Hellenistic levels began emerging in the last three seasons of excavation bringing us closer to the most intriguing period for the site as a “temple-state”. In this presentation I will be summarizing 14 years of excavation and 5000 years of settlement history at Comana Pontica.