A Brief History of Underwater Enterprise and Exploration (Part II): diving after scientific and archaeological data
The incentives to risk one’s life underwater from the earliest records of diving:
1) Subsistence and general aquatic harvest
2) Commerce/salvage
3) Warfare
Alexander the Great and the (legend of the?) diving bell (332 BCE)

If this actually happened then an important precedent was established
The Renaissance (14th-17th centuries) and the material culture of the Classical past

1531: in search of treasures from Caligula’s pleasure barges

With Classical learning a passion developed to collect Classical objects
How did underwater and in particular maritime archaeology emerge as a discipline? And how has it developed within the broader paradigm of archaeology?
The first large-scale excavation to uncover a Classical past (in aims not all too different from the Caligula barge excavations 2 centuries earlier)

History is down there and we need to uncover it (or salvage it from the sea floor)
A proto-empiricism including hypothesis testing was developed in Schliemann’s excavations of Troy.

Heinrich Schliemann began excavating Troy in 1871 with stratigraphic methods acquired from contemporary geologists.
The 19th-early 20th centuries: several bronze statues trawled up in fishing nets or discovered by sponge divers

- Poseidon of Livadhostro (fishing net, 1897)
- Apollo of Piombino (fishing net, 1832)
- Antikythera Youth (sponge diver, 1925)
- Poseidon/Zeus and a boy jockey from Artemision (fishing net, and sponge divers, 1926-28)
Working underwater was still cumbersome (for the dexterity required of excavating and recording an archaeological site)
Advances in underwater scientific research:
1893: the first marine biological survey of a seafloor (benthic) ecosystem off the South African coast
(directed by Knut Dahl)
Florida Geological Survey: dives into Wakulla Springs, Florida to collect fossil specimens

Drawing of a whole mastodon skeleton collected from Wakulla Springs in 1930
Material culture from the sea continued to be perceived as something to be salvaged from the sea, well into the 1950’s.

The cultural ‘treasures’ salvaged from the Bay of Artemision in 1926 and 1928
An ancient and heroic legacy of shipwreck salvage

Scyllias and his daughter Hydna: the first professional divers known by name, famed for salvaging huge volumes of gold and silver (tribute and booty) from a Persian fleet in the Aegean that lost many ships in a storm (ca. 480 BCE, recorded by Herodotus 40 years later)

Xerxes’ invading fleet in the Aegean

Hydna and Scyllias cutting the moorings of a Persian ship
A breakthrough in Nautical/Maritime Archaeology (1928-32)

The excavation and detailed recording of Caligula’s pleasure barge (after Lake Nemi was drained)
Shipwrecks from underwater contexts finally attract academic interest (1952)

Grand-Congloué shipwreck (sunk ca. 200 BCE near Marseille)

Non-diver archaeologist Fernand Benoit and non-archaeologist divers, including Jacques Cousteau
How the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck excavation (1960), directed by George Bass, differed from Grand-Congloué

The crew were trained archaeologists first, and divers second
Basic methods of excavation learned through the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck

Cape Gelidonya shipwreck: sunk ca. 1200 BCE
Brought to archaeologists’ attention: 1959
Excavated: 1960
Every feature of the shipwreck site is recorded *in situ* with drawings (plans) and photography.
The map (plan) of every archaeological site is recorded in two plains: horizontal and vertical.

Both are measured from fixed points (called datum points) placed around the perimeter of the site.
The airlift is normally the pick and shovel of underwater archaeology.
The significance of the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck excavations:

1) A new paradigm
2) Evidence from the shipwreck challenged the status quo of Late Bronze Age scholarship in the eastern Mediterranean
Data from the Cape Gelidonya shipwreck challenged long held assumptions.

Copper ‘oxhide’ ingots from the cargo of Cape Gelidonya

Syrian (left) and Minoan merchants and emissaries bearing ingots in Egyptian tomb representations.