



Whale products and processing

Whale processing

For most part of the Caneliñas history, the work with cetaceans was oriented towards the production of oil following the traditional Norwegian system.

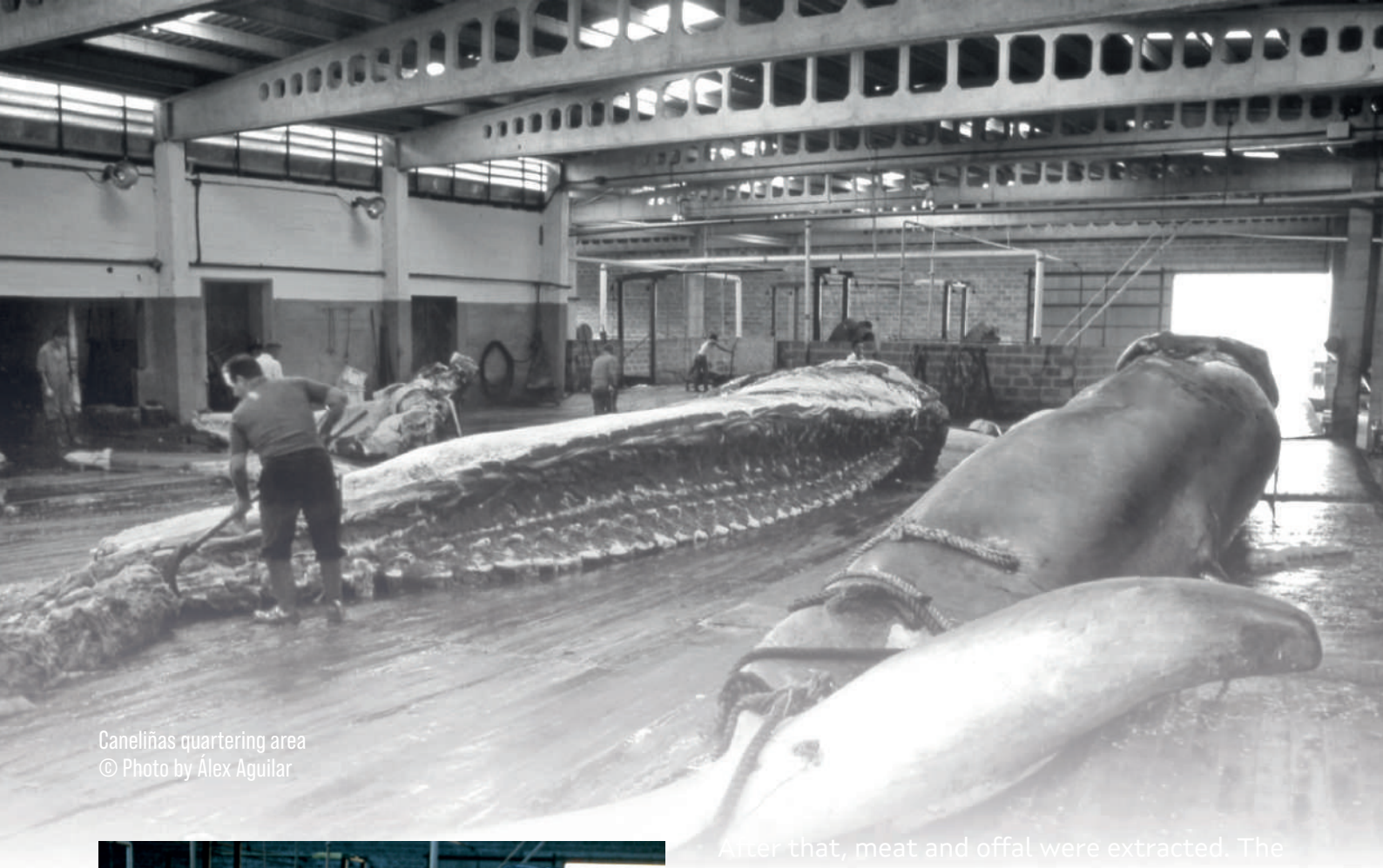
After the catch, the whalers would bring the whales to the wharf, which would later be taken to the hoisting ramp. There their tails were tethered with a wire rope and were hoisted mechanically up to the quartering area.

At that time began the cutting job, which lasted for just less than three hours. The first cutters started operations by making master incisions to later extract the hypodermic fat, which could be up to 50 centimetres thick.

Caneliñas quartering area. 1984
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Finback whale at the hoisting ramp. 1981
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Caneliñas quartering area
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After that, meat and offal were extracted. The



An important question was the waste management derived from whale processing. Usually, waste passed through a drying device known as *trommel* and through a mill that ground and transformed it into a flour used for cattle feeding or as agricultural fertiliser.



Caneliñas in 1925 with the wharf on the left, the fertiliser warehouse in the middle and six oil storage containers on the right
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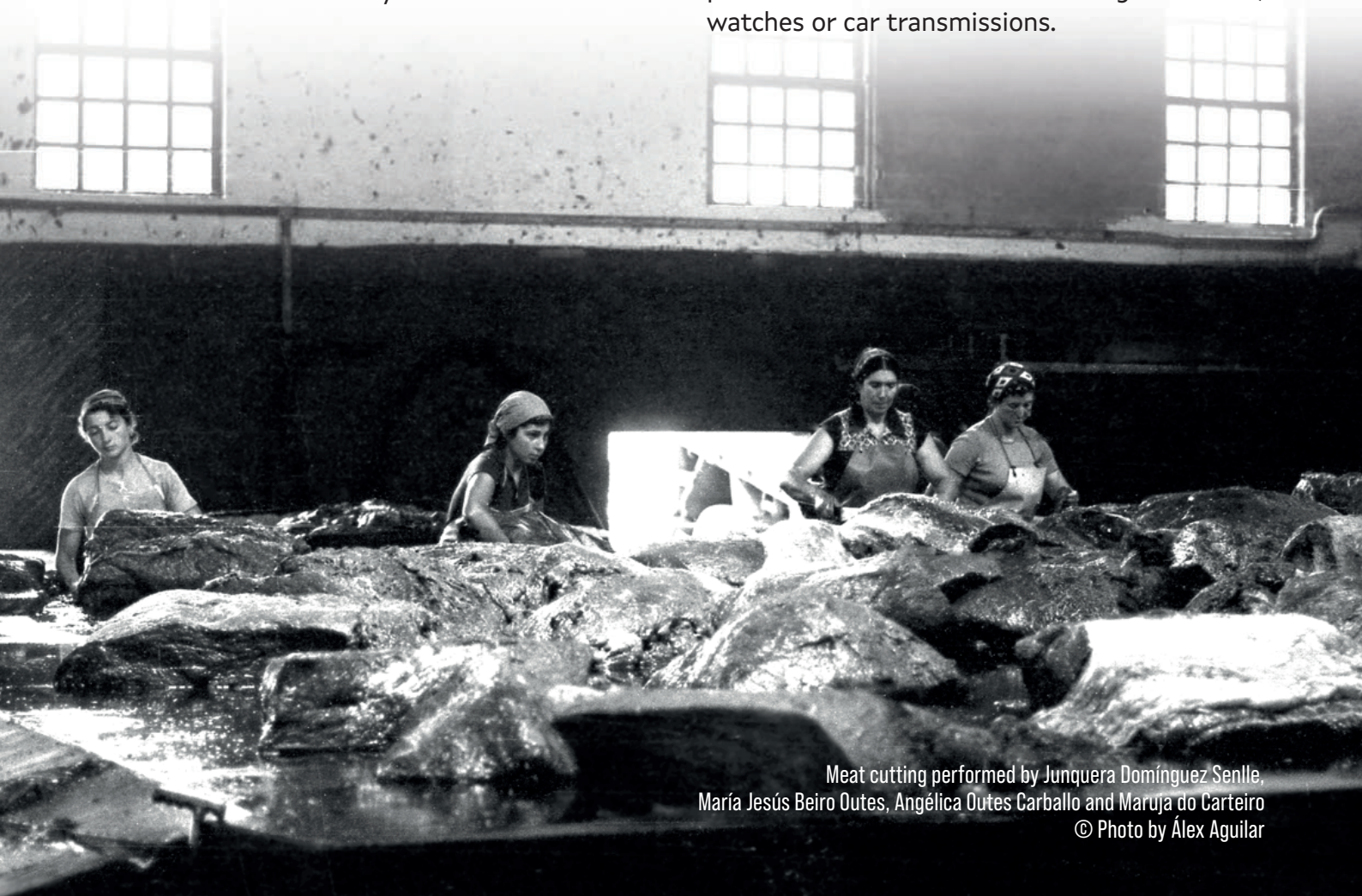


However, due to the large amount of animals caught, during the Norwegian operation period and the beginning of the IBSA period, it was almost impossible to recycle the whole waste production. The most recurring solution was to throw some of it into the sea, thus producing water pollution, bad smell and protests in the neighbouring villages.

Bones drying in the sun outside the Caneliñas factory in 1974
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Until the 1970s, the most valuable whale-derived product was oil, which was mainly fat-based and was used for different purposes, such as lubricant for heavy machinery, polish for leather and wool, varnish and paint, soap and for the food industry.

The spermaceti oil was extracted from the head of sperm whales. It was popularly called "whale sperm" and it was highly valued for its high wax content. It was used for lighting and soaps, lipstick and cosmetics or for lubricating precision devices such as sewing machines, watches or car transmissions.



Meat cutting performed by Junquera Domínguez Senlle, María Jesús Beiro Outes, Angélica Outes Carballo and Maruja do Carteiro
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The opening of the Japanese market in the 1970s allowed for a better use of cetaceans. The meat was used for food consumption and it was carefully prepared in Caneliñas on some special tables, where it was cut by the women and readied for its packaging and storage. The whales' kidneys, heart and intestines were also processed for food and part of the fat was used for its raw consumption as sashimi.

As for the offal, the liver was used in mink farms, since its high vitamin A content improved the animals' fur.

Another highly valued product was grey amber, which was rarely found in the sperm whales' belly. Its main use was the perfume and cosmetic industry.



Grey amber
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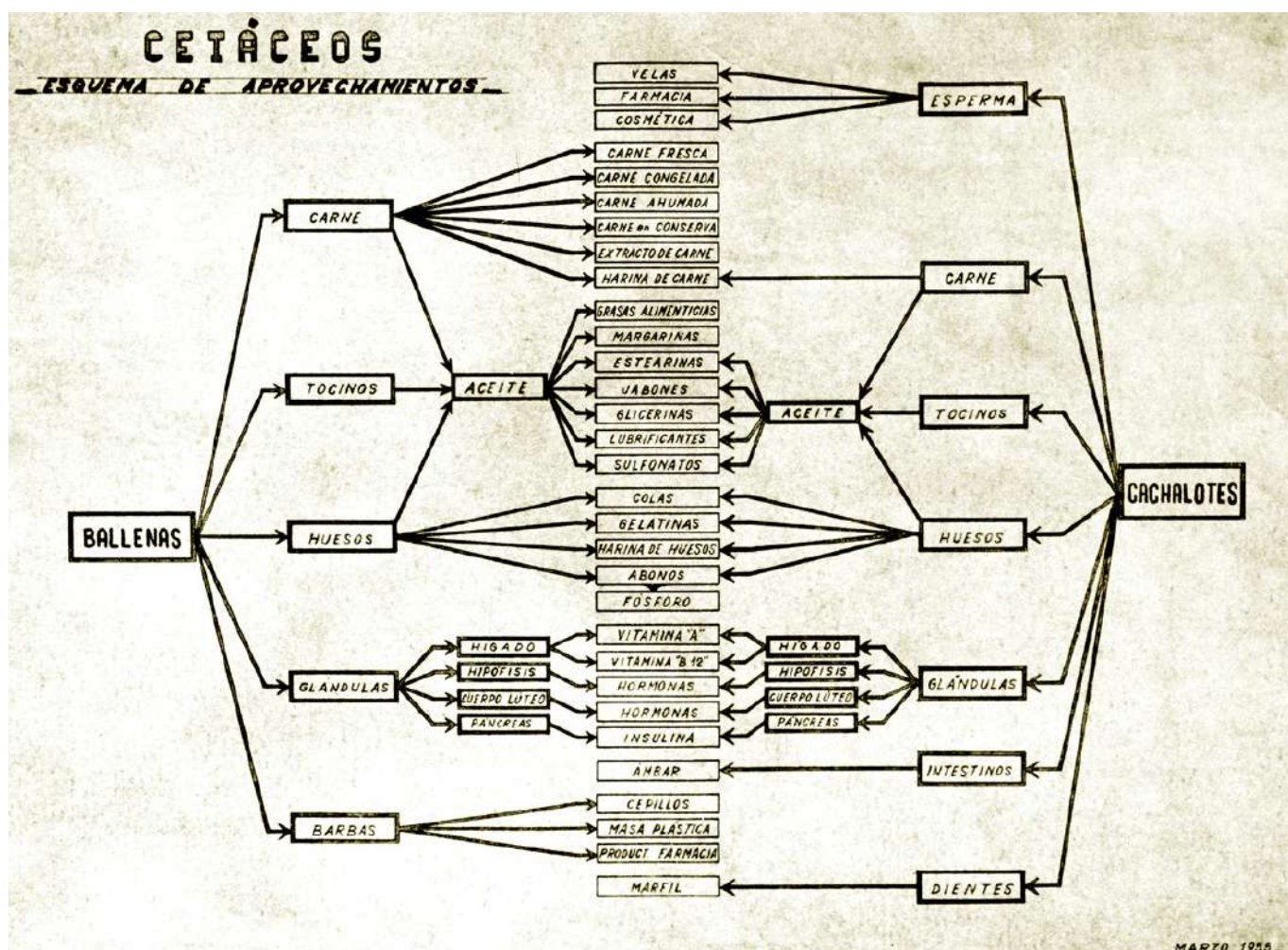


Diagram of whale and sperm whale by-products in 1951
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