

# Whaling in Brazil and its historical iconography

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze iconographies that show the whaling in the Brazilian Colony, dates back to the sixteenth century and had socioeconomic importance in the formation and implementation of people in the cost. This extractivist activity that involved the settlement of large cetaceans was a common scene in coastal areas, such as the Guanabara and Todos os Santos Bays, and Santa Catarina Inlets. In these visual documents we identified the main characteristics of whaling in Brazil: proximity to the coast, slave labor, specialization of work at sea, techniques of capture and processing, and the boats launched in the calm waters of the bays. The whaling iconography produced in Brazil have common elements, recognizable in the redundancy of certain visual arrangements: the chase, the harpooning, the towing, the shredding, the melting, and the storage. The most representative image of fishing is the dramatic moment in which man and animal meet since, in the Basque tradition, being close was paramount.

## Keywords

Whaling, Iconography, Whale, Brazil

## Introduction

Whaling is an economic, cultural, social, and historical activity in various locations worldwide. There have been many types of interactions between human populations and these cetaceans over the millennia. In the Western world, thought regarding the sea and its beings has been surrounded by traditions and innovations since ancient times. The whale, seen as a mythological being, feared as a sea monster, coveted as a natural resource, has more recently become a modern totem (Cohat, 1992; Kallang, 1993).

The different mentalities and perceptions toward whales are represented in Western iconography. In the history of Medieval Christianity, the whale is considered a symbol of rebirth and renewal in the representations of the biblical story

of Jonah and the navigation of St. Brendan (Coelho, 2015). Whales, as representations of monsters, are part of the Latin bestiary in the fifteenth-century maps. An example of this is in the *Marine charter*, by Olaus Magnus, from 1539; *Cosmography*, by Sebastian Munster, 1544; and *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, by Abraham Ortelius, from 1585 (Silver, 2015, p. 264). Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Netherlands, prosperous in technological innovations, trade, and art, created magnificent engravings with the theme of stranded whales, such as the works of Hendrick Golzius and Jan Saenredam (Silver, 2015, p. 272–275). In the nineteenth century, English Romanticism, with seascape painting, addressed the whaling theme from the production of Joseph Mallord William Turner, John Ward of Hull, Frédéric Martens, and John Wilson Carmichael (Hokanson, 2016).

The study of images produced in the context of world whaling – including maps, drawings, paintings, *scrimshaws*<sup>1</sup>, prints – is a fertile field for artistic analysis of the maritime world. Klaus Barthelmess explains that the interest in collections of maritime prints became more intense from the 20s of the twentieth century (Barthelmess, 2009, p. 643). Among the iconographic studies and prints from collection catalogs is the artistic production of whaling nations, such as the Netherlands, England, Germany, France, and the United States (Barthelmess, 2009, p. 644).

In the case of Brazil, little has been studied about the artistic works related to the phenomenon of whaling. Therefore, we are interested in analyzing the representations of whaling activity when this animal was seen as a natural resource of great economic interest due to the use of meat, bacon, bones, fins, tongue, and ambergris<sup>2</sup>. The visual works selected for this study correspond to four representations in different media and artistic techniques: an oil painting by Leandro Joaquim, dated between 1780 and 1790; an ex-voto in painted carving by an unknown author, dating from the late eighteenth century; a lithograph by Alphonse Beauchamp, and a watercolored lithograph by Hippolyte Taunay, both from the early nineteenth century.

## Whaling in Brazil

The practice of whaling<sup>3</sup> in Brazil dates back to the sixteenth century and had socioeconomic importance in the formation and implementation of people in the territories of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Santa Catarina. Whaling had greater expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Northeast region; in the South and Southeast, the most significant period dates back to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, under the rule of the Quintela family<sup>4</sup>. We can establish a chronology for whaling activity in Brazil, separating it into three major periods: monopoly, independent shipowners, and the industrial phase (Figure 1). Our focus in this text comprises analyzing the pictorial representations produced in the first period, referring to the height of fishing through Royal concession.

In the states mentioned above, frames were built<sup>5</sup> by the sea, in which stood a series of buildings intended for whaling. The buildings were grouped according to their functionality: buildings for the care of the body and soul, buildings for living, productive buildings, support buildings, and production guard. We highlight the productive building as the "nerve center" of a frame, in the words of Myriam Ellis, which characterized this type of enterprise as the Boiling house, with The Butcher's Workshop and the Furnace Workshop (Ellis, 1969, p. 63). The fat layer of the whales was transformed into whale oil<sup>6</sup>, used primarily for lighting (Figure 2).

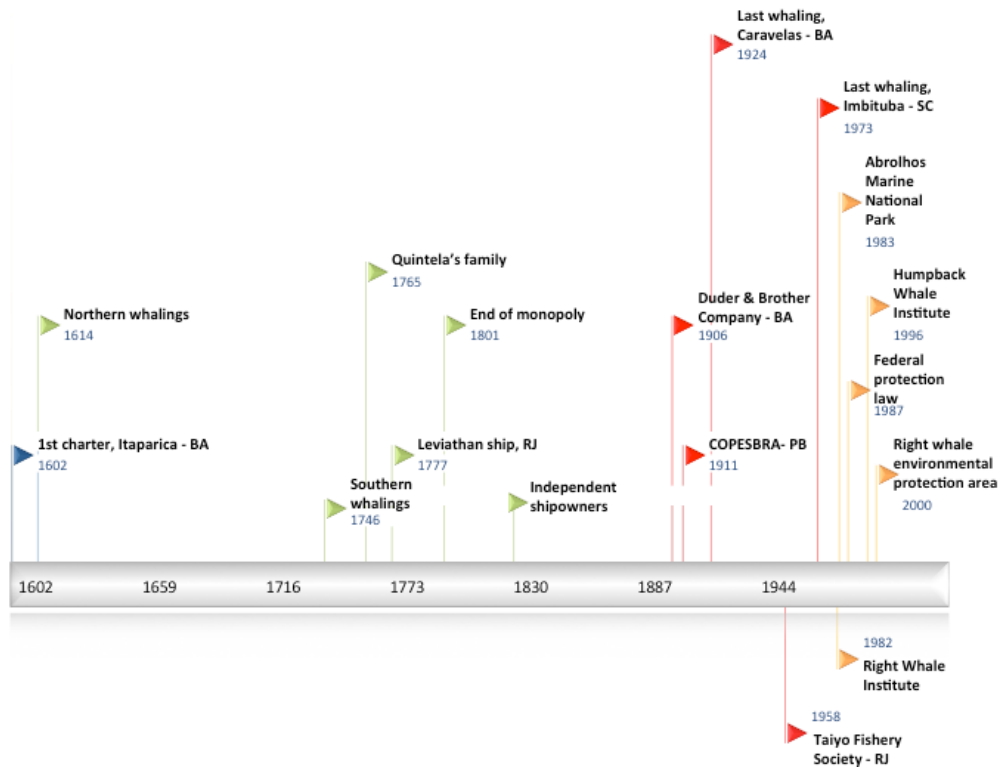


Fig 1. Timeline of whaling in Brazil. (Source: The author, 2018.)



Fig 2. José dos Reis Carvalho. *The illumination of fish oil*. 1851. Watercolor. The work depicts the illumination in Rio de Janeiro. (Source: LUCCHESI, 2015, p. 47.)

Randall Reeves and Tim Smith identify eleven eras of whaling in the world, classifying them by capture technique, time, and geographical area (Reeves and Smith, 2006). One of these techniques is the Basque type, which, brought by the 'Biscainhos' to Bahia in 1602, was widespread and passed on to other regions of Brazil (Valdés Hansen, 2016). The Basque type of whaling was done with whaleboats near the coast, when they approached the whales and launched the harpoons, the strategy being to harpoon the calf and then the adult animal (Figure 3). This fishing technique did not allow stocks to be renewed or for there to be an efficient use of the raw material, being harshly criticized by José Bonifácio de Andrada, in a work from 1790 (Andrada, 1977).



Fig 3. Basque whaler wielding a harpoon (4), holding a bayonet used to deliver the final blow to the injured whales (5), and winding a rope (6), from the work of Sanez Antonio Reguart, *Diccionario historico de los artes de la pesca nacional*, Madrid: n.p., 1795. (Source: PROULX, 1986, p. 46)

The population that worked in the whaling stations fulfilled different activities. Free individuals and slaves lived together in these whaling villages. Slave labor was intended for the most arduous and manual services, in dragging the whale and heating the boilers. The activities with a specific specialty – such as cooper, blacksmith, and craftsmen – were salaried. And the functions of the whalers – harpooners, helmsmen, and rowers – earned per whale captured (Ellis, 1971, p. 321).

Whaling was an important activity in Brazil, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for the following reasons: generation and supply of energy for public and private lighting, export of products derived from whales, consolidation, and fixation of the population on the coast, construction of vessels, generation of income for the Kingdom, and greater development of cabotage, trade, and communication between the areas of whaling in Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Santa Catarina (Ellis, 1966, p. 432).

## Whaling iconography

Undoubtedly, the best-known iconography in Brazil regarding whaling is the painting by the painter from Rio de Janeiro, Leandro Joaquim (1738–1798). The canvas, in an elliptical shape, measures 0.88 m by 1.140 m and is part of a six-panel collection at the Museu Histórico Nacional<sup>7</sup> (Figure 4). Whales appear throughout the maritime portion, with a total of eleven whales being represented by the bay.





Fig 4. Painting (oil on canvas) by painter Leandro Joaquim, *Pesca da baleia*, who died in 1798. It depicts the Frame of São Domingos and the Fort of Gragoatá in the foreground. On one canvas, the painter depicted all the stages of whaling in Guanabara Bay: chasing, harpooning, towing, flensing, melting, and storage. Collection of the Museu Histórico Nacional. (Source: Bloch, 1982, p. 2580.)

The artist Leandro Joaquim designed 16 landscape canvases of the city of Rio de Janeiro to decorate the pavilions on the public promenade, commissioned by Viceroy D. Luis de Vasconcelos. The works are dated between 1780 and 1790 (Silva, 2006). Leandro Joaquim inaugurated the landscape painting in Brazil as the main element of representation, in addition to being an excellent miniaturist:

*The artist wishes to document the city in its cultural and individual specificities, which demonstrates the not only profane but official character of his painting. The pictorial construction is simultaneously planar and cycloramic, refutes the perspectives, organizing the scene in horizontal bands to the top and to the sides, in a turn by the coastal edge of the city and the bay, which admits a game of reciprocities beyond its urban limits (...) (Carvalho, 2007, p. 35, our translation).*

In this framework, it is possible to identify the entire whaling operation<sup>8</sup> in Guanabara Bay in the mid-eighteenth century: fishing, removal of captured whales, shredding, and oil calculation for the Whaling station of São Domingos, in the District of Vila Real da Praia Grande, currently Niterói. In the foreground, the island of Villegaignon, the fort with the hoisted flag, and several whaling boats with sails on the mast in great movement. Ahead, vessels with their sails collected and anchored in the bay, which are probably galleons by the nautical architecture.

In the center of the seascape, we see all the stages of whaling: chasing, harpooning, towing, and shredding the cetaceans to the contract factory (Figure 5). During the chase, two whales squirt out water vapor. The presence of open eyes and squirt indicates they are alive. Leandro Joaquim painted the eyes of whales in a curious way and of disproportionate size, with an aspect and position similar to that of fish.

In a central position in the painting, a whale appears with the squirt splashing blood in the air, after being harpooned. Two other whales are in tow and two others, following the scene, are already being shredded. The whalers represented are white men, which indicates that they are a free population, hired on a seasonal basis.



Fig 5. Central part of the painting in which the chase, harpooning, and towing of the whale are represented, scene of the Frame of São Domingos, by Leandro Joaquim. (Source: Photo by Carlos Costa, 2018.)



Fig 6. Detail of the dismantling and melting in the painting of the Frame of São Domingos, by Leandro Joaquim. (Source: Photo by Carlos Costa, 2018.)



The whales represented present the characteristics of right whales: V-shaped squirt pattern, black skin color, smooth back, without a dorsal fin, and a robust body shape (Instituto de Pesquisas Cananeia, 2013, p. 22). The right whale was the correct whale to kill, hence its English name, for its behavioral characteristics and the quality of the fins, being preferred by whalers. As Felipe Valdés Hansen points out: *"On account of its large size, oil production was achieved by cooking the grease, the length of the baleen and floatability of the corpse, while the humpbacks and sperm whales took a back seat and were only caught occasionally"* (Valdés Hansen, 2016, p. 728).

The upper left corner depicts the dismemberment of two whales when enslaved individuals approached in a canoe or entered the shallower waters, equipped with cutting instruments of all sorts. The process begins from the initial cut, separating the head and caudal fin from the body. Soon after, the longitudinal cut opens the belly in two bands. The meat and bacon are removed in cuts transversal to the animal's spine (Figure 6).

At the end of the Frame, two slaves pull the whale using a rope attached to the capstan. The slaves separated the bacon, which they burned in pots in a shed, which would be the frying device. In the next building, the barrels with the already purified oil were stored in the tank house. The representation of the stages of whaling fulfills a didactic role for the public, showing, step by step, each action, as a *storyboard*.

Regarding the architectural configuration, Maria Augusta Evangelista Fernandes analyzes the remaining structures of the Whaling station of São Domingos and concludes that:

*(...) said buildings were designed in Mannerist or Jesuit style, because they present a robust, heavy appearance, of powerful masses, with quadrangular or segmented arch spans in rhythms characteristic of the style. Its architectural structure stands out in the landscape surrounding it, and the severity of its formal aspect is emphasized by the slope structure, resulting in the volume of a pyramid trunk* (Fernandes, 2002, p. 57, our translation).

In the background, we see the geological formation of Guanabara Bay with its *inselbergs*. From left to right, it is possible to see Praia Grande, the Fort of Gragoatá, the island and the Church of Boa Viagem, Jurujuba Bay, Pico, the Fortresses of Santa Cruz and Laje, Barra, and Pai Island (Ellis, 1969, p. 80).

Another elliptical panel by Leandro Joaquim, "Visita de uma Esquadra Inglesa na Baía da Guanabara", presents a configuration similar to the picture of whaling, with the Fort *Villegaignon* and the view of the mountainous landscape, depicting the whaling station with all its buildings. In the fishing framework, the focus is the whaling operation; the framework of the visit of the English squadron shows the entire trapiche and a rectangular building next to it.

Another iconography of erudite aspect, made for local circulation, but of valuable visual message, is the ex-voto<sup>9</sup> existing in the Chapel of the Whaling station of Piedade, on the central coast of Santa Catarina (Comerlato, 1998) (Figure 7). Executed in a devotional character, the work shows us how the fishermen respected the sea and begged the intervention of the Holy protectors in their daily work. The ex-voto was produced in wood cut into volutes and counter-volutes, referring to the religious carving, is small in size, with 43.2 x 42.8 x 1.3 cm (Richter *et al.*, 2016).

The ex-voto follows the Portuguese model, presenting two thirds of the surface with the representation of the miracle and, in the lower third, the presence of the caption, with the parts and their limit delimited by a golden line. Another characteristic that we attribute to the Portuguese model is the way in which the agent of the miracle, in this case Our

Lady Of Mercy, was presented in the firmament and enveloped in clouds (Silva, 1981, p. 58). The scene of the disaster is probably painted in oil, and, due to its pictorial quality, we believe it to be of foreign workmanship, given the artistic development in southern Brazil in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In the foreground is the dying whale positioned with its head in front, with a contorted body, a harpoon embedded in its back and a suspended caudal fin. In the middle of the rough sea and marked with ridges of water, on the right portion of the painting, is a person, which the final part of the description indicates to have drowned. In the background, two lifeboats, one on each side in the composition, with men waving. Above the horizon line, the cloud-filled blue sky is crowned by the appearance of the patron saint of the said frame. The caption was written on the support itself, in cursive, on a black background and in white ink, as follows:

*M<sup>o</sup> que fez N S da Piedade ao Timoneiro Ant<sup>o</sup> Cardoso e a Augusto Fran<sup>o</sup> d Oliveira q sahindo ao mar em lancha de pesca deste anno d 1.765 tendo justamente uma Baleia ao par de outra que lhe deu com tão grande pancada na lancha à quebrou lançando ao mar todos os q estavam nella os quais nadando seis horas em cima d'água sem esperanças de salvação chamaram pela padroeira a N S que lhe foi servidos depressa lhe acudiu a lancha de q: não tinham esperanças algumas e ela salvou toda gente menos um preto que já tinha morrido afogado<sup>10</sup>.*



Fig 7. Ex-voto of the Chapel of Whaling station of Piedade, municipality of Governador Celso Ramos, SC. (Source: Photo by Fabiana Comerlato, 1998.)

Thus, we can say that, in addition to whales being the basic raw material for a whaling station, the man-whale relationship did not occur only in the economic sphere but also in the religious, imaginary, and symbolic conception of this whaling population in front of these animals. Even today, we do not know another ex-voto who refers to the whaling universe in Brazil.

The next two images are lithographs produced to illustrate books of encyclopedic content by French writers of the early nineteenth century, relating to the history of Brazil. The first lithograph we will analyze composes the opening of Volume

VIII of Alphonse de Beauchamp's book, published in French in 1815 and translated into Portuguese in 1820<sup>11</sup> (Beauchamp, 1820) (Figure 8).

In the foreground, we see two canoes with a crew of five men in motion, paddling and pointing at the wounded animal. Note that some men are dressed in few garments, a white cloth surrounds their waists in a kind of skirt, with bare breasts. Some wear a turban on their heads; others a top hat. The turban is an *haussá* inheritance of Islamic devotion brought by enslaved Africans from Central Sudan. According to José Reis, the *haussás* served the whaling station of Itapuã and others nearby. The author relates the ability of these peoples with white weapons, and may have stood out with harpoons and spears (Reis, 2014, p. 79). The top hat, on the other hand, is part of the clothing of North American whalers.



Fig 8. *Method of whaling, bringing them ashore, and extracting oil from them.* 1820. Lithograph. (Source: Machado and Gerlach, 2007, p. 332.)

In the right corner, the interest of the attention of fishermen, we can visualize a harpooned whale, writhing and spraying water. The squirt is a single jet, like that of humpback whales. The place where the harpoon is jammed is the best place for the certain death of a whale, just below the head. In the two whales represented, we see the concern to draw the bulges of the head, the squirt, the texture of the skin, and the pectoral fins similar to those of fish and dorsal fins.

In the left corner in the background, a row of men on the seashore drags a whale to dry land, while others accompany the operation in small canoes on the water. Other huddled men point to a galleon grounded on the shore and another part of the group appears to be heading towards the whale. In a higher plane, buildings appear grouped, next to palm trees and three people, and two buildings contain chimneys.

Because Alphonse de Beauchamp never set foot in Brazil and his first three books are a literal translation of the book *History of Brazil*, by Robert Southey, a plagiarism denounced by the author himself at the time, we can draw some conclusion about how this engraving was produced (Medeiros, 2010, p. 132; Southey, 1810). First, the fact that each volume begins with an engraving and the whaling theme of Volume VIII drew our attention. According to the author

himself, the description of whaling was collected from reports of travelers and informants (Beauchamp, 1820, p. 187–188).

Given the above, the execution of an image depicting whaling was certainly done in Europe, based on the text and other iconographic references. The clothing of the enslaved draws our attention for bringing elements such as the turban and top hat, referring us to the North American whaling reality. The absence, in the lithography, of whaleboats, characteristic of whaling in Brazil, is also noticeable, replaced with monoxile canoes. Finally, the purpose of lithography was to represent the method:

*The system and movements which they carried out to catch them, to then transform them into oil, are as follows. The men sail in small boats to catch the whales, and bring them to dry land; when they are sighted, they throw harpoons or grappling hooks and unfurl a lengthy line or rope in armfuls or balls; this causes a rapid movement from the whales which are tormented by the injury and pain; they chase behind them in the boats for as long as it takes until they are bleeding and weak and, sometimes, already dead, they are pulled to the beach, or they come to the coast naturally and with little cost. They are then taken to the houses in which the oil is produced, which are situated close to the beach (Beauchamp, 1820, p. 185–186).*

After the opening of the ports and the arrival of the Portuguese court to the Colony, scientific and artistic expeditions were welcomed since they sought to offer a synthesis of the exoticism, the picturesque, and the exuberance of the tropics. Numerous landscape paintings emerge in this context by artists such as Hippolyte Taunay, Jean Baptiste Debret, and Johann Moritz Rugendas. As Ana Maria Belluzzo explains:

*Finally, the theme inseparable from the experience of the nineteenth-century traveler is the landscape. With the coming of the Portuguese court to Brazil, especially after independence, professional artists arrive in the country, dilettantes with mastery of drawing. Anchor in Rio de Janeiro passengers of tourist trips around the world. They have an educated vision of the picturesque's aesthetics and seek to enjoy characteristic landscapes (Belluzzo, 1996, p. 18, our translation).*

Associated with a man of letters, Ferdinand Denis, Hippolyte Taunay, on his coming to the city of Salvador, executes a watercolor to compose the book *Le Brésil, ou Histoire, Moeurs, Usages et Coutumes des Habitans de ce Royaume*<sup>12</sup>, which depicts the most dramatic moment of the whaling operation: the capture (Figure 9). We consider that this engraving was made in the same place depicted, between 1816 and 1822, the year of its publication. We estimate that his observation point was at Morro do Cristo, precisely the place that offers the same viewing angle depicted on the screen. Ferdinand Denis assures that, “The aim of the engravings, which adorn this work, is above all to portray with exactness the nature of the country; Mr. H. Taunay drew on site most of the views of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco.” (Gomes Júnior, 2012, p. 113).





Fig 9. Hippolyte Taunay. *Pêche de la baleine près de Bahia*. 1822. Watercolour lithograph printed by Charles Motte. (Source: LAGO, 2001.)

In these four years of stay in tropical lands, Ferdinand Denis worked for three years at the French consulate in Bahia (Biblioteca Nacional, 2005, p. 90). In the work entitled *Brésil*, published in 1837, the author comments that he knew other references from naturalists and travelers who wrote about whales and still poses as an attentive spectator of the whaling effort: "The author of this news saw a whale shredded by iron shovels, with which huge portions of bacon were raised" (Denis, 1980, p. 251).

The engraving is an accurate iconographic document of whaling in eighteenth-century Bahia<sup>13</sup>. In the foreground, the agony of the harpooned whale is represented with care by the launch of water into the heavens with the beating of the tail, the head in fury, and the spray pouring like a fountain. The scene of the whale harpooning reveals the high specialization required by this type of fishing. The number of fishermen embarked varied between 8 and 10.

In Figure 9, the whaling boat in the foreground draws our attention to detail. The different colored stripe identified the company on the side of the whaling boat. The flag had a different color for each harpooner, marking the possession and right over the harpooned animal. Another singular detail in this iconography is the record of the function of the boy of arms, who is being helped by another: when launching into the sea, he had to dive and close the whale's mouth with an immense rope. This brave feat must have surprised Taunay, who had the man depicted descending amid the waves, which were breaking on the hull of the vessel.

In the background, a lifeboat with two sails on a mast is in an observation position. The equipment is ready, the harpoon from the vessel's bow, the flag that identifies the whaling company in hand. This time, it was not they who succeeded in fishing. In the third plane, in the right corner of the image, the rocky point with the Fort Santo Antônio da Barra and the lighthouse appear. In front of it, the sand cord is covered by vegetation, emphasizing the coconut grove, Taunay and Denis describe the Barra to the fort with a landscape bordered by coconut groves (Taunay and Denis, 1822, p. 55). On the horizon, we see the silhouette of the Island of Itaparica.

Regarding the representation of the whale, there is no concern in detailing its morphological characteristics. The trace of the caudal fin, the size of the body, and the squirt show us it is a whale. Taunay and Denis write that, in Bahia, the whales caught were smaller than those of the North Atlantic, and their baleens were also small, which leads us to assume that they were from humpback whales<sup>14</sup> (Taunay, 1822, p. 53–55).

## Final Considerations

The uniqueness of each whaling iconography presented here is answered by the contexts of production and circulation of these works. Previous works have certainly influenced the iconography produced in Brazil since they resemble image production from Europe and the United States. The form in which the caudal fins are represented in the diving position, squirt, the harpooning site, head details, the chase, the harpooning, the towing, and the accidents form an iconographic repertoire common to the logbooks<sup>15</sup> of whaling ships, *scrimshaws*, to the drawings of travelers in other North Atlantic whaling areas.

Therefore, the iconographies represented here have common elements, recognizable in the redundancy of certain visual arrangements: the chase, the harpooning, the towing, the shredding, the melting, and the storage. We related the analyzed work and the stage of the whaling operation, signaling its presence in green, as presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Relationship of the works with the presentation of the stages of whaling.

Leandro Joaquim	Ex-voto	Alphonse de Beauchamp	Hippolyte Taunay
Chase	Chase	Chase	Chase
Harpooning	Harpooning	Harpooning	Harpooning
Towing	Towing	Towing	Towing
Flensing	Flensing	Flensing	Flensing
Melting	Melting	Melting	Melting
Storage	Storage	Storage	Storage

The most representative image of fishing is the dramatic moment in which man and animal meet since, in the Basque tradition, being close was paramount. This meeting could have two outcomes: either the whale could be victorious or survivor, or the final link would be the glory and triumph of whalers before the largest animals in the South Atlantic.

## Endnotes

1. "SCRIMSHAW (skrim'shō — noun, 1851 (origin obscure. Naut). Generic name given by sailors to the manufacture of hobbies during whaling or other voyages and to the resulting products such as engravings on bone, ivory, shells, and other materials" (Afonso, 1998, p. 141).
2. Ambergris is formed by indigestible material in the intestines of sperm whales. It is not soluble in seawater. These masses floated in the sea and came to be stranded on beaches, being collected and used (Figueiredo, 1996, p. 185–187).
3. We use the term whaling in preference to hunting since it is being a denomination present in the documents of the time. Whales were considered royal fish, during which time royal concessions were issued through auction contracts, which fixed the responsibilities

between the parties. Let us also remember that, at the scientific level, whale taxonomy began to be studied and first classified in the eighteenth century.

4. The period of greatest whaling production was between 1765 and 1789 when it was in the hands of the Quintela family and the *Contrato da Pescaria das Baleias nas Costas do Brasil* was established, supported by the policy of the Marquis of Pombal (Ellis, 1969, p. 156–157).
5. "From *armar pesca*, *armar às baleias*, that is, to equip for fishing, for whaling, derives the expression *Armação das baleias*, or simply *Frame* (Ellis, 1969, p. 59, our translation).
6. Whale oil was also referred to in historical documentation as "oil of the Earth" or "fish oil" (Ellis, 1957).
7. The six elliptical panels are: "Visita de uma Esquadra Inglesa na Baía da Guanabara"; "Revista Militar no largo da Carioca", "Romaria marítima diante do Hospital dos Lázaros", "A pesca da baleia na baía do Rio de Janeiro", "Vista da praia, morro e igreja da Glória", "Vista da lagoa do Boqueirão, aqueduto da carioca e igrejas da Lapa e da Carioca".
8. "This term does not refer only to the capture of whales, but also to the processing that is carried out on their carcasses in order to obtain the products that will later be consumed and/or marketed." (Quiroz Larrea, 2012, p. 5, our translation).
9. "By becoming a material that crosses the ages, we can look at ex-votos no longer only as a promise, but also as a document. It is an aesthetic document about an intimate conversation of the faithful with the Saint. It is a document that translates much of its time in its graphic representation (represented image, text, and material used). In an attempt to materialize gratitude for a miracle and thus perpetuate his gratitude for having been "heard" by the Saint invoked, the faithful produce a document that can be interpreted at any time in history" (Figueiredo, 2015, p. 82, our translation).
10. Miracle of Our Lady of Mercy to the helmsman Antonio Cardoso and Augusto Francisco de Oliveira, who, going out to sea in a fishing boat, this year 1765, having a whale next to another that, delivering such a great blow to the boat, broke it, throwing into the sea all who were in it, who, swimming six hours on top of water without hope of salvation, called for the patron Saint Our Lady who served him quickly, the boat came to him that they had no hopes, and she saved everyone but one black man who had already drowned.
11. The first reference to the image I found in the *Enciclopédia Ilustrada do Brasil*, citing to be the engraving of the collection of the Instituto Histórico Geográfico Brasileiro (Bloch, 1992, p. 2018). The second indication of the provenance appears in the book *São José*, as belonging to a private collection (Machado and Gerlach, 2007, p. 332). And finally, after 20 years of the first reference, it appears in an article by Cristina Brito and collaborators as belonging to the work of Beauchamp (Brito et al., 2016, p. 12). Thus, having clarified the context of production of the artistic work, we still do not know its authorship.
12. "*Le Brésil* by Hippolyte Taunay and Ferdinand Denis is a book of geographical and cultural description, but also of history. It was the first to translate into French the *Letter* of Pero Vaz de Caminha, which had only become public a few years earlier, in 1817. It is also the first to present a pictorial version of the First Mass, described in the *Letter*, in a drawing by Hippolyte Taunay. *Le Brésil* contains 53 engravings of landscapes, genre scenes, instruments, and weapons, views of Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Olinda, human types, manufacturing activities, slaves in street activities, slave shops, scenes of tribal life, and portraits of Indigenous people." (Gomes Júnior, 2012, p. 13).
13. The geographer Adrien Balbi, in his notes on Bahia, lists the main economic activities of the Recôncavo region, among them whaling: "En general les bourgs du Reconcavo font un grand commerce de farine de manioc; de legumes secs, de tabac et de sucre; plusieurs pêcheries de baleines (frames) offrent une branche fructueuse d'industrie!" (Balbi, 1834, p. 9).

14. The right whale and humpback whale were the most fished whale species in the South Atlantic. The humpback whale has 250 to 400 baleens on each face of the jaw, 65 cm long and 30 cm wide (Instituto De Pesquisas Cananéia, 2013, p. 30). The right whale has between 230 and 290 narrow and long baleens, each measuring more than 2.4 m (Instituto de Pesquisas Cananéia, 2013, p. 22).
15. All the activities that took place on the vessel, the cruise, distance, wind, weather, geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude), geographical landmarks, information about port areas, vessels of other flags, deaths and accidents, the amount of animals hunted, and barrels of oil, meat and bones produced and stored were recorded in the *logbooks* (Gilje, 2016, p. 67). These logbooks also present visual representations that reinforce the most important events of whaling trips: whale sighting, hunting, vessels, relevant geographical references, and the presence of other marine animals.

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