

Children in the Atlantic Slave Trade to Jamaica in the late 18th Century

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I. Introduction

When put in a full Atlantic context, the heavily male portrayal of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade must come into question. As David Eltis has demonstrated, compared to the migration of indentured servants to the Americas, the slave trade had a significantly large number of women and children.¹ Moreover, as Eltis and Engerman have shown, ‘a higher proportion of children left Africa than left Europe.’²

Fortunately, in the more recent scholarship, increasing attention has been given to the history of enslaved children. Most significantly would be the pioneering work of Wilma King and the later published work of Marie Jenkin Schwartz – both of which focus on enslaved children in the United States.³ There has also been a small but increasing volume of studies that focus on enslaved children in other parts of the Americas. Very little work has been done on enslaved children in the Hispanic and Luso-American slave holding regions. This is surprising as Brazil and Cuba received the largest numbers of enslaved children – most of whom arrived in the nineteenth century which is a historical period rich for primary sources.⁴

¹ David Eltis, "Free and Coerced Transatlantic Migrations: Some Comparisons," *American Historical Review* 88, no. 2 (1983), 251-280.

² David Eltis and Stanley Engerman, "Was the Slave Trade Dominated by Men?," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1, no. 14 (1992), 237-257.; See also, David Eltis and Stanley Engerman, "Fluctuations in Sex and Age Ratios in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1663-1864," *Economic History Review* 46, no. 2 (1993), 308-323.

³ Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America, Blacks in the Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁴ To my knowledge there are no studies which look specifically at children in the slave trade to either Cuba or Brazil. In the case of Brazil, ‘Ser mãe: a escrava e m face do aborto e do infanticídio,’ *Revista de História [Brazil]*, Vol. 120 1989, 85-96. Kathleen Higgins has published on the manumission of women and children. See Kathleen Higgins, ‘Gender and Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: The Prospects for Freedom in Sabara, Minas Gerais, 1710-1809,’ *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 18 (2), 1997, 1-29.

The majority of those works that look at the British Caribbean either focus exclusively or put much emphasis on the post-1807 period – that is after the end of the slave trade.⁵ As a result, the focus has been on those children born in the Caribbean. Enslaved children who were forcibly transported to the British Caribbean still remains a relatively under studied topic. In part, this has to do with the availability of sources. The abolition of the British slave trade in 1807, means that historians would have to work with eighteenth century primary material, which are relatively few when compared to the nineteenth century. The publication of the Dubois Slave Trade Database, however, has somewhat remedied the situation and has made vital statistical data available to scholars interested in pursuing this area of research.⁶

This paper, which is part of a larger project, aims to redress this lacuna in the scholarship. Because the larger study focuses specifically on late eighteenth century Jamaica, the emphasis will be on the enslavement of children from the key areas of provenance for the captives brought to the island. These areas are Bight of Biafra, the Gold Coast, and West Central Africa – which combined account for 87% of the captives brought to Jamaica between 1776 and 1800.

This study explores the motives for transporting enslaved children to Jamaica. The Jamaican plantocracy was very reluctant to purchase young children. Yet, in the late eighteenth century British slave traders often purchased children on the coast of Africa and brought them to the island. As many as 18% of the captives brought to Jamaica, between 1776 and 1800, were children. This paper will argue that the decision of British slave traders to purchase significant numbers of children was influenced by certain peculiarities of the slave trade. Because the slave

⁵ See for example, Colleen Vasconcellos, "And a Child Shall Lead Them? Slavery, Childhood, and African Cultural Identity in Jamaica, 1655-1838," Doctoral Dissertation, (Florida International University, 2004); Beverly Blake, *A History of Children in 19th Century Jamaica*, M.A. Thesis (University of the West Indies [Mona], 1991); Isabel Cranstoun Maclean, *Children of Jamaica*, (Edinburgh: Turbull and Spears, 1910). There are a number of other forthcoming doctoral dissertations on enslaved children coming out of the University of the West Indies and Howard University.

⁶ David Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

trade was a trade in human beings it was unique to other trades. Slave traders who were purchasing and transporting a cargo of human beings necessarily had to concern themselves with a number of costly factors such as mortality, food supplies, health, and even the potential for rebellion. It was these factors that played a determining role in shaping the purchasing decisions of slave traders on the coast and ultimately influenced decisions to purchase enslaved children available for sale in Africa.

II. Making Slaves: The Capture of “Man, Woman, and Child”

In 1790, during an inquiry on the slave trade, the sailor Isaac Parker gave an eyewitness account of the capture and sale of Africans in the Biafran hinterland. According to Parker, in 1765 on his second trip to Africa, Captain George Colly ordered him to go to New Town with the ship’s doctor in order to purchase slaves. Parker, however, decided to abandon the slave ship *Latham* upon which he was employed as there was a ‘want of provisions.’ He sought refuge with the slave trader Dick Ebro who was ‘a king’s son in that place.’ Parker was harboured for several days until the ship had left the coast. He stayed in Africa for five months and during that period he was ‘employed’ in fishing, and cleaning the muskets, cutlasses, and blunderbusses of the Africans with whom he resided. The problems with relying on a source grounded in a twenty-five year old memory are obvious. However, much of the detail Parker mentions can be corroborated to some degree.⁷

⁷ According to the Slave Trade Database, the slave ship *Latham* did travel to Bight of Biafra during this period but not in 1765 as Parker recalls. The *Latham* made 2 trips. The first was in 1766 and the other was in 1769. The database references Lloyd’s Register of Shipping and Richardson, David, Kathy Beedham, and M.M. Schofield, *Liverpool Shipping and Trade, 1744–1786* (ESRC Data Archives, University of Essex, 1992) as the primary sources from which this data is derived. Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*.

In addition, Parker’s reference to the African slave trader, Dick Ebro can also be validated. ‘Dick Ebro’ was referenced in an account book that recorded slave trading activities in the Bight of Biafra during this period. See P.E.H. Hair, “Antera Duke of Old Calabar - A Little More About An African Entrepreneur,” *History in Africa* 17 (1990). For more details on Dick Ebro see, A. J. H. Latham, *Old Calabar, 1600-1891: The Impact of the*

While Parker's experience gives interesting insights into the relationship between Africans and Europeans in Africa, just as valuable are his accounts about the capture of Africans who were to be sold in the Atlantic slave trade. While resident in Africa, Parker was invited to accompany Dick Ebro and others on a slave raid. He described the process as such:

We paddled up the rivers in the day-time . . . when night came we put the canoes ashore, leaving two or three Negroes in each canoe, the rest flying up to the village, taking hold of everyone we could see; and as we took them we handcuffed them, and brought them down to the canoe; after we had done so we quitted the place and went father up the river, and so during the second time; and we got to the amount . . . of 45 Slaves at that time.⁸

When asked if any children were captured in the raid, Parker reported that they 'took man, woman and child as they could catch them in the houses.'⁹ Another British observer to slave raids in this region described it in much the same way. He also reported that the search for slaves were made up river by canoe, that the raids were made at night, and that the canoes were left behind with a few armed men while the others went to capture unsuspecting victims in the chosen village. They 'seized men, women, and children promiscuously.'¹⁰

As was the case in the Bight of Biafra, the mechanics of enslavement in the Gold Coast and West Central Africa - the other key areas of provenance of the enslaved transported to Jamaica - did not allow captors to discriminate by age and sex as they went after their victims. Between 1776 and 1800, the Gold Coast and West Central Africa accounted for approximately 24% and 17% of the captives exported to Jamaica respectively. Both the *Akan* wars of the Gold Coast and the *Kongo* civil war in West Central Africa ensured that many of the captives of these regions were

International Economy Upon a Traditional Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 32, 49-50. For Isaac Parker's account see, PRO, 1/84, p. 123-124.

⁸ Isaac Parker, Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee, PRO, ZHC 1/84, p. 124.

⁹ Isaac Parker, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC 1/84, p. 125.

¹⁰ November 5th, 1787, Excerpt from Thomas Clarkson, 'Essay on the Efficiency of the TRADE' in Elizabeth Donnan, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. II (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 572.

victims of war. According to Joseph Miller, in his study on the Angolan slave trade, the captives taken during warfare included 'disproportionately high numbers' of women and children. He attributes this to the fact that adult males could more successfully flee the site of capture while women and children were more vulnerable to being overpowered by their captors.¹¹

In fact, so indiscriminating was the slave trade that sometimes women 'so advanced in their pregnancy' gave birth on the journey to the coast.¹² Nor were the elderly and weak exempt from the horrors of enslavement. If ship captains refused to purchase a slave because of 'age, illness, deformity, or any other reason,' however, it was not unknown for these poor captives to be put to death, as they served no purpose to their captors otherwise.¹³

III. The Atlantic Slave Trade: How Many Children?

Although no segment of African society was completely spared in the process of enslavement, the proportion of men, women, and children who were transported across the Atlantic did vary from region to region. In the Bight of Biafra, captured women and children were sent in unusually large numbers across the Atlantic. This is in contrast to the Gold Coast and West Central Africa where women and children were generally absorbed into the domestic slave trade and left the coast of Africa in much smaller numbers.¹⁴

¹¹ Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 380.

¹² Excerpt from Alexander Falconbridge's *Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (1788) in George Francis Dow, ed., *Slave Ships & Slaving* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company Limited, 1980 [1927]), 137.

¹³ Excerpt from Alexander Falconbridge's *Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (1788) in *Ibid.*, 141. For a specific example in Goree, see Henry Ellison, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC 1/84, 362.

¹⁴ For a discussion of how the social structures of societies in West Central Africa were altered by the numerical dominance of females during this period see John Thornton, "Sexual Demography: The Impact of the Slave Trade on Family Structure," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Martin A. Klein and Claire Robertson (Madison: 1983); John Thornton, "The Slave Trade in Eighteenth Century Angola: Effects on Demographic Structures," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 14 (1980).

Of the captives leaving the Bight of Biafra, between 1776 and 1800, women and children accounted for 33% and 19% respectively – a combined total of 52%.¹⁵ Hence, adult men made up only 48% of all captives leaving this region during this period. The limited number of adult males available for export caused the slave trader Captain Forsyth, after purchasing a cargo of 58 men, 1 man boy, 128 women, 11 girls and 3 infants at Old Calabar, wrote apologetically to his employer for being unable to ‘procure more male slaves, [them] being so scarce.’¹⁶

Although women and children enslaved in the Gold Coast and West Central Africa tended to be absorbed into the domestic slave trade in the late eighteenth century, however, there were factors within Africa that led to the export of significant numbers of children. In West Central Africa, in particular, a period of severe drought caused an increase in the number of young boys being sold into the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the late eighteenth century.¹⁷ During periods of famine in Africa, it was not unusual to sell dependents into slavery. This was so much the case that between 1784 and 1795, the period of major drought in the eighteenth century, there was a large peak in the volume of slaves. In fact, the number of captives sold in 1784 was three times that of the previous year.¹⁸ The proportion of enslaved children sold across the Atlantic during this period children also increased and accounted for approximately 27% of the captives leaving West

¹⁵ See Table 1 in Ugo Nwokeji, "African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic," *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001), 67.

¹⁶ Captain Forsyth to James Rogers, July 9th, 1792, PRO, C107/13. According to Ugo Nwokeji, there was a relatively high proportion of women and children being exported across the Atlantic from this region for several reasons: the institution of female slavery in the Biafran hinterland was marginal; the female role in agriculture was relatively ‘unimportant’; and the demands of the competing trans-Saharan market had little effect in this region. See *Ibid.*, 51, 56, 62.

¹⁷ Women and young girls, who were no doubt also sold during times of drought, did not leave the coast of West Central Africa in the same large numbers as young males. Enslaved females were highly valued in Africa not only for their labour but also because they could more easily be socially incorporated into African societies. As a colonial census of Angola shows, as early as 1777 and 1778 girls outnumbered boys below the age of 14 – suggesting that young boys were commonly sold into the trans-Atlantic slave trade to meet the demands of European purchasers. In the age cohort 7-14, there were 65 boys to 100 girls. In the age cohort 1-7, there were 80 boys to 100 girls. See Table 5.1 (Angolan Population Structure, 1777-1778) in Miller, *Way of Death*, 160. For a discussion on female slaves in Africa see Martin A. Klein and Claire Robertson, "Women's Importance in African Slave System," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Martin A. Klein and Claire Robertson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press).

¹⁸ Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*.

Central Africa between 1786-1791.¹⁹ Most of the enslaved children were young boys.²⁰ In the last quarter of the eighteenth century in the Gold Coast region, approximately 20% of captives sent across the Atlantic were children.²¹

IV. Buying and Selling Children

Despite the availability of children for sale on the African coast, there can be no doubt that under ideal circumstances, British slave traders would have avoided the purchase of children who were perceived as too young. Merchants in Jamaica were very hesitant to purchase enslaved children they believed to be too young to labour efficiently. There was no shortage of complaints of ‘the young people [being] too small’ in newly arrived slave cargoes.²² In 1792, the Jamaican merchant, for example, John Cunningham wrote ‘I sold 129 slaves’ but complained that ‘There were 45 boys and girls many not more than 8 or 9 years of age.’²³ Similarly, on the 12th of January 1792, the Jamaican merchant Allan White complained that the average sale price for the slave cargo he was to sell, from the ship *Fanny*, would be lowered by the large proportion of children present in the cargo.²⁴ On January 27th, after the sale was completed, he further expressed his frustration at having to include in the calculations of his average sale price, not only ‘eight

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 158-159.; See also, Joseph C. Miller, "Slave Prices in the Portuguese Southern Atlantic, 1600-1830," in *Africans in Bondage: Studies in Slavery and the Slave Trade*, ed. Paul E Lovejoy (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 57-59.; Joseph C. Miller, "The Significance of Disease, Drought and Famine in the Agriculturally Marginal Zones of West-Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 23, no. 1 (1982), 28-30. In nineteenth century Angola, during another period of drought, large numbers of children were also sold into the domestic slave trade. See, Jill Dias, "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola, c. 1830-1930," *Journal of African History* 22, no. 3 (1981), 380.

²¹ Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*.

²² PRO, C107/9, Francis Grant to James Rogers, April 10th 1789; See also C107/9, Thomas & William Salmon & Co. to James Rogers, June 26th 1789; See also C107/9, Francis Grant to James Rogers, August 4th 1789.

²³ PRO, C107/6, John Cunningham to James Rogers, April 20th 1792.

²⁴ PRO, C107/6, Allan White & Co. to James Rogers & Co., January 12th, 1793.

diseased people’ but also, ‘two mere infants who must have been given [away] with their mothers.’²⁵

Although there was a poor market for very young children in Jamaica, many terrified children were put on slave ships and brought to the island specifically and the Americas more generally. Dr. Thomas Trotter, who was employed on the slave ship *Brookes* in 1783, reported that while slaving at Annamaboe on the Gold Coast, the slave trader Captain Noble purchased many boys and girls who ‘had not father or mother, or any relation on board.’ In particular, Trotter made reference to ‘a little girl of about 8 years of age’ who reported that she ‘had been carried off from her mother’ by the men who sold her to the ship.²⁶ It is unlikely that it will ever be known if this 8-year-old child was one of the fifty-eight captives who died before the slave cargo was sold in Jamaica.²⁷ Nor is there any available documentary evidence that would indicate what proportion of 638 captives purchased on this voyage were children. Trotter’s claim can be given some credence, however, as the ship captain also reported that there were ‘several’ children on the voyage.²⁸

Similarly, the sailor William Dove reported another instance of a young girl who was kidnapped and sold to the slave ship *Lilly* which was trading at Sierra Leone in 1769. According to Dove, a girl was brought on board by an African named Ben Johnson who was self-titled ‘Grand Trading Man.’ Johnson reportedly brought her to the ship in his canoe and sold her to

²⁵ PRO, C107/6, Allan White & Co. to James Rogers & Co., January 27th, 1793; Correspondence from the merchant Alex Macleod also suggests that a slave cargo comprised of enslaved individuals who were considered too young could affect profits when he wrote, ‘I sell them tomorrow and though a great part of the [slave] cargo is young yet I trust I shall make a respectable average,’ C107/5, Alex Macleod to James Rogers, July 3rd 1791.

²⁶ Thomas Trotter, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 83.

²⁷ The number of captives purchased and deaths on this voyage, as reported by Noble, are higher than that recorded in the Slave Trade Database. The database does not include the number of captives who died before departing the coast of Africa or those who died in the harbour at Kingston, Jamaica. Clement Noble, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 109; Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*.

²⁸ Clement Noble, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 114.

Captain James Salcraig. Unfortunately for Johnson, this was to be his last sale as shortly thereafter, two other African men returned with him and told the captain that he had stolen the young girl. They offered to sell Johnson, their justification being that he was a ‘Teefee’ – which meant thief. Dove did not report that the young girl was released nor did he say that the Africans who sold Johnson asked for her freedom in return.²⁹ It is likely then, that she was already a captive when taken by Johnson and the Africans who reported her theft were merely interested in financial compensation for their loss. There is evidence, however, that other children were more fortunate. Such was the case of a young boy who was sold ‘his father, uncle, or some near relation’ came on board and claimed him. He was eventually freed.³⁰

Like Trotter’s experience on the Gold Coast, Dove also reported he had repeatedly seen children brought on board ‘separately by themselves.’ In the absence of corroborating evidence that would shed light on the accuracy of his memory, it is worth noting that, according to Dove, children were very much a part of the slave trade in Sierra Leone. As he reported it, there were as many as thirty to forty children boys and girls with some ‘sucking at their mothers breasts’ and four or five children who were born during the middle passage.³¹ The quantitative data certainly supports Dove’s impression as approximately 34% of the captives leaving this region between 1751 and 1775 were children.³²

Although slave traders had little interest in keeping families together, the evidence suggests that it would have been a rare instance when infants were separated from their mothers. Speaking of his experience in the Senegambian region, the sailor Isaac Parker reported that ‘[Parents and children] were divided, some in one ship and some in another, except sucking children who went

²⁹ William Dove, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 101.

³⁰ Thomas Trotter, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 83.

³¹ William Dove, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 101-102.

³² Eltis et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM*.

with their mothers.’³³ Similarly, according to Captain Noble who traded on the Gold Coast, ‘children at the Breast . . . [were] always with their mothers.’³⁴

V. WHY CHILDREN?

Hence, despite the fact that Jamaican planters were generally unwilling to purchase enslaved children considered too young to labour, both the quantitative and qualitative evidence makes it clear that enslaved children were continually purchased in Africa and brought to Jamaica. In part this can be explained by the peculiar dynamics involved in the buying and selling of human beings. Purchasing and transporting a cargo of humans meant that British traders had to concern themselves with issues such as mortality, food supplies, health, and even the potential for rebellion.³⁵ It was these factors that influenced the purchasing decisions of slave traders on the coast. This was by no means lost on those involved in the trade. In fact, this was so much the case that the merchants of Isaac Hobhouse & Company of Bristol instructed one of the ship captains under their employ to supplement his slave cargo with purchases of ivory as ‘in that Commodity there’s no Mortality to be fear’d.’³⁶

Although British slave traders often went to Africa with the hope of purchasing a particular demographic ‘assortment’ of slaves, that they often left the coast disappointed is clear in the

³³ Isaac Parker, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 125.

³⁴ Clement Noble, *Minutes of the Evidence Taken before the Select Committee*, PRO, ZHC, 1/84, 114-115.

³⁵ David Richardson, ‘The The Costs of Survival: The Treatment of Slaves in the Middle Passage and the Profitability of the Eighteenth-Century British Slave Trade,’ Serge Daget (ed), *De La Traite A L’Esclavage: Actes du Colloque international sur la traite des Noires, Nantes 1985*, (Nantes: Centre de Recherche Sur L’Histoire Du Monde Atlantique, 1988), 170.

³⁶ Isaac Hobhouse & Co. to William Barry, Hobhouse Papers, Jefferies Collection, Vol. 13, Bristol Central Library, cited in David Richardson, ‘The Costs of Survival: The Treatment of Slaves in the Middle Passage and the Profitability of the Eighteenth-Century British Slave Trade,’ Serge Daget (ed), *De La Traite A L’Esclavage: Actes du Colloque international sur la traite des Noires, Nantes 1985*, (Nantes: Centre de Recherche Sur L’Histoire Du Monde Atlantique, 1988), 170.

contemporary correspondence.³⁷ These traders walked a fine line and had to balance the cost of purchasing a ‘proper assortment’ of slaves against the cost of keeping them alive and subdued both on the coast as well as during the middle passage. Mortality rates, the risk of rebellion, and the cost of feeding captives would all be reduced if a ship captain could purchase a full cargo of captives on the African coast in as short a period of time as possible.

Case in point would be a letter written to Captain Charles Molyneaux of the slave ship *Christopher* by his employers in Liverpool. Molyneaux was hired to purchase slaves in West Central Africa. In the letter of instruction he was cautioned that, ‘the success of our voyage appears to depend entirely on your having a short passage . . . [and] quitting the Congo before the rains set in and your Crew and Negroes become sickly’³⁸ In the Gold Coast region, much to the annoyance of other slave traders, Captain Currie purchased captives above the asking price of African slave traders at Cape Coast. He justified purchasing his captives above market value because ‘his ship lay at a very great expence [sic], therefore dispatch was necessary and . . . he could save his owner money if he got off soon.’³⁹ In 1790, Captain William Blake, who was employed to purchase slaves in Old Calabar, wrote his employer a letter of clear distress. After waiting on the coast for several weeks, he described Old Calabar as a ‘disagreeable sickly place’ and reported that to keep the ship on the coast much longer ‘would be destroying of everything, [as there would be] expence of provisions, burying of slaves dayly [sic]’⁴⁰

Clearly then, a slave trader’s ability to demand a slave cargo of a particular age and even sex ratio would be severely undermined, if the primary concern of keeping the slave cargo alive was being done at considerable expense. If the spread of disease, the risk of rebellion, and the cost

³⁷ PRO, C107, #12, William Blake to James Rogers, October 1790.

³⁸ Letter to Captain Charles Molyneaux, 14th June 1791. Christopher Papers, John Hope Franklin Collection, Duke University.

³⁹ Jerome Bernard Weuves, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, 30th January 1782.

⁴⁰ William Blake to James Rogers, October 1790, PRO, C107/12.

of feeding captives jeopardized the profitability of a voyage, slave traders on the African coast might have thought it financially prudent to purchase captives quickly in order to get a full cargo – even if they would eventually be sold at a reduced price in Jamaica because they were deemed too young by the Jamaican plantocracy.