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Morbid Crossings: Surviving Smallpox, Maritime Quarantine, and the Gendered Geography of the Early Eighteenth-Century Intra-Caribbean Slave Trade

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In 1737, an enslaved African woman gave birth to a “mulatto” boy while quarantined on the desert island Isla de Aves Grande, near La Guaira, the port that served Caracas. She had already endured morbid crossings as a captive on multiple slave ships, including an intra-Caribbean voyage on the *Elizabeth*, a British South Sea Company ship that was plagued by smallpox and quarantined when it arrived on the Venezuelan coast. This article charts her journey across the Atlantic and through the Caribbean from Barbados to La Guaira, Cabo Blanco, Isla de Aves Grande, and back to La Guaira again. It demonstrates how gendered violence and colonial responses to contagious diseases shaped enslaved women’s experiences in the intra-Caribbean slave trade. Reconstructing this woman’s journey using qualitative Spanish and British records and social and cultural historical methods provides crucial insights into the structure and geographic scope of the slave trade to the Spanish Americas and within the Caribbean.